

You may click on a subject below to jump to that page...

CONTENTS

Introduction-----	3-5	Pre-Trip Preparations-----	20-21
Trip Leader Assets	3	Registration	20
Trip Leader Requirements, Duties	3	Instructors	20
Trip Leader Benefits	4	Weather	21
Disadvantages of Trip Leading	5	Event Report Forms	21
Risk Management-----	6-9	Miscellaneous Logistics-----	22-24
Considerations for Assessing Risk	7	Vans	22
The “No-Go Decision”	9	Gas Costs	22
		Skill Levels and Equipment Use Eligibility	22
		ORGT’s Database	23
		Illegal / Dangerous Behavior	24
Liability-----	10-12	Participant Enjoyment-----	25-26
Definition of Negligence	10	Name Game	25
Informed Consent	11	Physical/Mental Comfort	25
Waiver of Liability / Assumption of Risk	11	Return Time	25
Challenge by Choice	12	Positive Reinforcement	26
Equipment Liability	12	Welfare of Group vs. Individual	26
Additional Safety Considerations-----	13-15	A Final Word-----	27
Safety Policies	13		
Safety Talk	13	Appendix A: Trip Leader Checklist-----	28
Group Safety	13		
Safety Equipment	14	Appendix B: First Aid Kit Contents-----	30
Repair Kits	14		
Rescue/Emergency Resources	14		
First Aid Kits	15		
Emergency Medical Cards	15		
Emergency Procedures-----	16-19		
Injury / Illness	16		
Automobile Accident	18		

[Click here to return to the Table of Contents](#)

ORGT TRIP LEADER MANUAL

INTRODUCTION

The basic philosophy behind all ORGT trips is "Safety and Enjoyment". As a trip leader (TL), you will have the primary responsibility for making your trips both safe and fun. **You** are one of the most important factors in the success of ORGT. Without people like you who are willing to undergo training and accept responsibility, there could be no trips and no ORGT.

This manual outlines the logistical and safety concerns pertaining to ORGT official trips. It is not intended to be a substitute for the judgment you have developed during your training and experience with ORGT. Its purpose is to help you prepare for the leadership decisions you will inevitably have to make in your role as ORGT trip leader.

Trip Leader Assets

The formal requirements for trip leaders are below, but a TL also needs leadership and people skills, such as:

- ◆ The ability to relate to other people in a positive way
- ◆ A cool head – the ability to be rational under pressure
- ◆ Good judgment - based on experience in your sport and the ability to foresee consequences of action/inaction
- ◆ The ability to **assert** yourself and be directive with people to keep the trip under control, especially in emergency situations

Trip Leader Requirements, Duties and Benefits

(from ORGT General Policies in Operations Manual)

Requirements

- ◆ Is 18 or older
- ◆ Is a GT student in good academic standing *or* GT faculty/staff *or* volunteer approved by the general committee
- ◆ Is an instructor in his/her sport
- ◆ Meets sport's requirements for skill / experience, trip leader level (see sport specific policy document)

- ◆ Is certified in Wilderness First Aid. Note: New trip leaders have a 6 month grace period during which to become certified. However, they are responsible for making sure a certified person is on their trips.
- ◆ Has read ORGT policy documents, Operations Manual, and Trip Leader Manual. Understands ORGT policies and procedures.
- ◆ Has passed the general trip leader test
- ◆ Has completed at least one practice trip (supervised by a TL)
- ◆ Has passed a check-out trip (supervised by ORGT professional staff, Senior TL, or one TL and one full instructor)
- ◆ Has been approved by the subcommittee (majority vote with endorsement from a TL)
- ◆ Has been approved by the general committee (majority vote)
- ◆ Has been interviewed and approved by the Outdoor Recreation Coordinator

Duties

- ◆ Keeps certifications current
- ◆ Documents skill / experience levels of participants in the ORGT database
- ◆ Acts as equipment check-out attendant when needed
- ◆ Takes a leadership role in his/her subcommittee
- ◆ Upholds ORGT policies, procedures, and quality of programming / instruction
- ◆ Votes on important ORGT issues at general committee meetings
- ◆ Leads at least 2 trips per year to maintain active status
- ◆ Returning Trip Leader (one who has been inactive for over a year):
 - Renews all appropriate certifications
 - Is endorsed by the subcommittee to lead trips (SC may require practice trips and other reviews)
 - Is approved by ORGT professional staff
 - Duties and benefits will be the same as active Trip Leaders

Benefits

- ◆ Free equipment and instruction in any sport while active, and for one year thereafter (Inactive TLs receive 2 free gear rentals per year after grace period expires)
- ◆ Free transportation (pays no gas fees) on trips s/he leads

[Click here to return to the Table of Contents](#)

- ◆ Half price on ORGT Instructional Schools
- ◆ Free use of Wilderness Outpost gear (to outfit oneself for personal trips, within reason) and Climbing Wall
- ◆ Combination to ORGT & subcommittee gear room
- ◆ TL shirt
- ◆ Reimbursement for dinner (up to \$10) on trips s/he leads, provided s/he turns in a receipt
- ◆ First aid supplies for personal use, pending ORGT staff approval

In most cases it is not these external rewards that motivate people to become TL's; the hard work and logistics just aren't worth it! Rather, it is the challenge and personal satisfaction that comes from helping others to experience adventure, and from maintaining ORGT as a unique, high quality, *student-led* program.

Here are some reasons others have chosen to lead trips for ORGT:

- ◆ Building lifelong friendships
- ◆ Increasing skills and self-confidence
- ◆ Appreciating the natural environment
- ◆ Developing communication and interpersonal skills
- ◆ Creating your own style of leadership
- ◆ Interacting with people who are devoted to the pursuit of adventure

Disadvantages of Trip Leading

Here are the major disadvantages of being an ORGT TL:

- ◆ Legal and moral responsibility for safety of the group
- ◆ Responsibility for all trip logistics
- ◆ Necessity of making unpopular decisions - saying "no" to peers.
- ◆ Time spent leading trips could be spent pursuing personal advancement in your sport.

We feel the advantages of being an ORGT Trip Leader greatly outweigh the disadvantages, but this is an individual choice.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The powerful rewards of outdoor adventure are gained by challenging ourselves. Challenge entails uncertainty and risk. If we eliminate all the risk, we also eliminate the challenge, *and the reward!*

Our goal is to *reduce* these risks to acceptable levels. Our participants have a right to expect that we will take reasonable precautions against preventable risks.

In addition, we must *educate* our participants as to the risks inherent in their sport. A thorough understanding of preventable and inherent risks is necessary to make informed choices, and to develop judgement.

This, in a nutshell, is *risk management*. The following risk management strategies are incorporated into our operating procedures and our instructional philosophy.

Instruction

- ◆ Appropriate instructional progressions
- ◆ School notes, class sessions and checklists prepare participants
- ◆ Trip Leaders discuss hazards prior to each trip

Procedures

- ◆ High level of training and skill required of ORGT trip leaders
- ◆ Trip leaders familiar with trip locations (difficulty level, access points, rescue resources)
- ◆ Written safety policies governing equipment use
- ◆ Appropriate instructor / student ratio maintained (usually 1:4)

Equipment

- ◆ Well-maintained equipment, inspected regularly
- ◆ Fully equipped first aid kits on all official trips
- ◆ Emergency and repair equipment/kits on all official trips

Philosophy

- ◆ Information shared with participants increases their awareness of hazards and ability to make informed choices
- ◆ Emphasis placed on personal responsibility for one's own safety
- ◆ Understanding that participants may make "no go" decisions at any time (challenge by choice)

Considerations for Assessing Risk

As a TL you will be faced with many judgement calls during the course of your trip. It's a dynamic process. Weather and environmental conditions change. People become fatigued. Equipment fails. One way to assess risk or safety is to think in terms of these three factors:

People Factor: This boils down to skill, ability, experience and judgment. You need to think in terms of individual *and* group abilities. Are your students skilled and fit enough to meet the challenge? Are they tired, demoralized, cold, or otherwise compromised? Do they have the experience to make appropriate decisions? Is overconfidence an issue? Do you have a good instructor / student ratio? Are your instructors experienced enough to give excellent supervision? Do you have enough strong people to offset (and help) the weaker ones?

Environment Factor: Environmental considerations include weather, water levels, terrain, road conditions, and distance from help/resources.

Are conditions changing? Is flooding a threat? How will delays caused by the conditions effect your situation? Are you protected from lightning, or do you need to get to a safer place? Is the terrain (cave, rapid, mountain) appropriate for the trip? What would happen if you needed to evacuate or get help? Where are the walk-out points?

Equipment Factor: For our purposes, this includes sports equipment, safety / rescue equipment, clothing and general preparedness. Is your equipment adequate for the challenge? Do participants have the right clothing for cold, rain or immersion in water? Do you have extra clothing and the ability to start a fire? Do you have emergency and first aid equipment? What are the consequences if a piece of equipment fails? Can you summon help, if necessary, with signaling devices, cell phone or radio?

The three factors are interrelated, and can overlap to create accident potential. Consider the following example:

Prior to a four-day backpack trip to Linville Gorge, North Carolina, a TL warns participants to be prepared for cool temperatures and rain. Despite the warning, one student shows up in sweats, with a light nylon windbreaker as his rain protection. This has happened before with the same student. Since he should know better, the TL decides to let him learn "experientially". She makes sure her instructors are carrying extra clothing and rain gear. By day two, the student's clothing is wet, and he looks miserable. Still, he insists he is fine and refuses extra clothing. That afternoon, fatigued and uncoordinated, he trips and severely sprains his ankle.

The group has to face an evacuation situation 1000 vertical feet below the rim of the gorge in a remote setting.

Contributing factors in this accident were:

- § People: Student's stubbornness led to cold, fatigue, perhaps mild hypothermia. TL's choice of "hands off" leadership style backfired.
- § Environment: Cold, rainy, remote
- § Equipment: Inadequate clothing

Any one of these factors by itself could have been a surmountable obstacle. Combined, they created a serious situation. The TL learned her lesson:

When added risk factors are present, (people, environment, equipment) the TL must make more conservative choices, and/or take action to offset the risks.

What could this TL have done differently?

- § People: Dealt more effectively with this student's ego OR assigned an instructor to be keep an eye on him
- § Environment: Chosen a less remote location to test beginners' skills against environmental challenges
- § Equipment: Insisted on students' being adequately prepared

Occasionally, risk factors combine to produce a situation in which the people and/or equipment are simply not up to the challenge. If you are unable to choose another challenge (different route, river, etc), you must be willing to abort the trip.

The "No-Go Decision"

The TL at any time before or during an official trip may chose to discontinue the trip to avoid a hazard; this is known as a "no-go" decision. Note: Remember that *participants* have the right to make a "no-go" decision. This is discussed more under "you don't have to do this" disclaimers.

LIABILITY

Precautions against liability have become important due to the increasingly litigious nature of our society. Attitudes about individual responsibility for accidents have changed, placing a heavier burden on the institution. Unfortunately, there are times when precautions against liability seem at odds with common sense. We hope that, in most cases, protecting ourselves from legal liability will also result in a safer trip.

Definitions

Negligence is a failure to take "reasonable precautions" or a failure to act as a "reasonable and prudent professional". This could be as simple as forgetting to appoint a "sweep" person on a caving trip, thus allowing an injury to go unnoticed.

Gross Negligence is much more serious and involves blatantly acting in an irresponsible or unsafe manner. This can be intentional or unintentional. For example, the trip leader may have forgotten to pack the first aid kit, and chosen to run the trip anyway.

Reckless Misconduct is an intentional, unreasonable act which shows total disregard for safety. For example, the TL knows that a rapid is extremely unsafe and that a participant is not qualified to run it. Yet she encourages the participant to do so because s/he is overconfident and needs to be "taught a lesson").

In order to demonstrate negligence, these criteria must be met:

- § Duty owed: In our case, a TL has a clear duty to his/her students on an official trip.
- § Breech of duty: The TL failed to take reasonable precautions.
- § Injury or loss: The participant suffered some type of "damage".
- § Proximate cause: There is a causal relationship between the breech of duty and the injury or loss.

Concepts / Precautions

Informed Consent

Giving people accurate, detailed information before they get involved with an activity allows them to make informed decisions regarding participation. This is why it is so important to give accurate, reliable information regarding our programs, give people time to read the liability waivers, and inform students of exactly what types of things could go wrong. Here some of the ways we impart information to students:

- § Registration Forms
- § Waivers and Med. Cards
- § School Notes
- § Class / Logistics Sessions
- § Safety Talks

The more *documented* information a student receives, the better able we are to state that s/he truly understood the risks and freely chose to participate.

Waiver of Liability and Assumption of Risk

By now you've read the GT Liability Waiver and Assumption of Risk Form that all participants sign. The idea behind a liability waiver is that the participant waives their right to hold us legally accountable for injuries and losses. The assumption of risk part attempts to demonstrate that the student understood the dangers and assumed responsibility for any consequences. These waivers have met with varied success in court. Waivers have been thrown out for the following reasons:

- § Participant was a minor
- § Form wasn't legible
- § Form wasn't filled out correctly, in ink
- § Participant didn't really understand form, didn't have time to read it
- § Participant didn't really understand nature of risk
- § Staff downplayed the importance of document ("Just sign it.")
- § Participant signed under duress ("Sign here or you can't go")
- § Court demonstrated gross negligence

You get the picture. We must all work together to make sure that students have ample time to read, understand, and correctly complete the waiver.

Challenge by Choice or "You-Don't-Have-To-Do-This"

Participants need to choose their risks for three reasons:

- § It protects us from liability
- § It promotes personal responsibility
- § It helps them learn judgement

Your role is to guide their judgement. You should feel free to prevent a student from doing something you feel is unsafe, but you should never coerce a student into doing something s/he is not comfortable with. If participant asks you whether they should try a certain challenge, **never say "Go for it!"** even if you know they can handle it. The safe answer is always "no". A more humane answer is, "I don't know, but I'll be glad to help you consider the alternatives and assess your abilities - you'll have to make the final decision". From a legal and moral standpoint, it's a good idea to give the "You-don't-have-to-do-this" disclaimer at three distinct points:

- § Before the trip leaves: Remind the group that the sport has certain risks, and list some of these risks. Tell them that they can opt out of the trip now, or opt out of specific activities any time they feel uncomfortable.
- § At the starting point (i.e. put-in, trailhead, edge of the pit): Remind them to decide for themselves whether to attempt any challenge during the trip.
- § At an intimidating challenge or hazard: If possible, give them some alternatives to the activity (i.e. run shuttle, have a picnic, walk a specific rapid, have a separate belay for the rappel)

Equipment Liability

Another liability issue that is important to ORGT is that of equipment. In our sports, a person's safety depends to a large extent on the equipment s/he is using. For this reason, our instructional schools teach participants the proper way to use and inspect equipment. In addition, we are careful about retiring old gear according to manufacturers specifications. Despite these precautions, if a participant were to be injured as a result of ORGT's use of inappropriate or defective equipment, then ORGT may be negligent.

ADDITIONAL SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Safety Policies

Below are ORGT's safety policies for official trips (from the General Policy Document). In addition, you must know and enforce your sport's safety policies, which are written in your sport's policy document.

ORGT Official Trips:

- § Contain a safety briefing, which all participants hear
- § Have at least one Wilderness First Aid certified person on the trip
- § Have first aid kits, medical cards/info, and safety/rescue gear
- § Have a 1: 4 instructor (or instructor-in-training) to student ratio (exceptions made for backpacking day hikes)
- § Have event reports and trip rosters on file at ORGT
- § Adhere to general and sport specific safety policies

Safety Talk

The safety talk can happen at the logistics / class session, at ORGT, or at the trip site. In any case, participants should be reminded of key points just before the activity begins. The following should be included:

- § There are certain risks
- § You-don't-have-to-do-this
- § Possible hazards (list these)
- § Precautions / procedures (i.e. knot tying, safety checks, paddling/hiking order, sweep)
- § What-to-do-if (i.e. swimming whitewater, rock fall, lightning)
- § Communication (i.e. paddle signals, belay commands)
- § Whereabouts of first aid kit

Group Safety

In most circumstances, you'll want to appoint a "sweep". This should be a trusted instructor who can provide assistance to slower participants if needed. The "sweep" should carry the first aid kit and safety gear.

Note: Under no circumstances should you allow the weakest member or the weakest subgroup to lag behind the group unsupervised.

In general, it's best to keep the group together as much as possible.

The more people you have to help you deal with an emergency, the better off you are. If the group must separate, the TL should appoint an instructor to be in charge of each subgroup. Also, a clear plan about meeting place and time should be known by all. Try to have a first aid kit and safety equipment in each subgroup.

Safety Equipment

Most sports have a standard set of group safety / rescue equipment, which should be taken on all official trips. An equipment list is in the policy document for your sport. It is the TL's responsibility to see that these items are carried on the trip and to know how to use them.

Repair Kits

Appropriate repair equipment could consist of an extensive tool kit or just a roll of duct tape, depending on your sport and the length, difficulty and remoteness of the trip. Check your sport's policy document for the minimum repair kit items that should be taken on official trips.

Knowledge of Rescue/Emergency Resources

As a TL, you need to be quite familiar with your trip site. It is highly recommended that you lead trips only to areas you know (this is a rule in whitewater sports). You should know the walk-out points for the specific trip, the nearest place to get help, and the nearest hospital. If there are specialized rescue resources available in the area for your sport, you should know how to contact them.

At the time of this writing, ORGT is compiling emergency information. A "write-up" for your trip may be available on a database, or in the "Emergency Info" notebook. If not, you need to look it up! When you fill out the Event Report form, this information will be compiled by ORGT. ***When you plan a trip to a new location, it is your responsibility to research the emergency information, and to provide it on the Event Report form.***

First Aid Kits

Bringing the first aid kit is on the trip is one of the most important safety responsibilities of the TL. The TL is also responsible for making sure the first aid kit is complete before each trip. During the trip, all participants should know who has the first aid kit.

You should be familiar with ORGT's first aid kits; know what's in the kit, where it's located and what it's used for. A list of our first aid kit contents is located in Appendix B of this manual.

On request, ORGT will supply TLs with most of the items to make a basic first aid kit. TLs are encouraged to make personal kits, which can then be used as an "abbreviated" kit for non-official trips, or as a "supplement" kit for trips that require more than one. Please note that every official ORGT trip must have a *complete* first aid kit with *all* items in the list printed in Appendix B.

Emergency Medical Cards

Emergency Medical Cards (med. cards) are kept in an alphabetical file box. These cards contain information that would be necessary should someone need medical treatment. For this reason, **they must be carried on the trip** (generally in the first aid kit).

It is important that you **review the med. cards prior to the trip**. You need to know if a participant has a condition that could cause a medical emergency and/or necessitate prescription drugs. The most common conditions that could result in a medical emergency requiring immediate treatment are asthma and history of allergic reaction to insect stings/bites.

Our med. cards state that individuals with these conditions must carry their own medications, and that the TL needs to know where these medications will be kept. If you find this type of condition on a med. card, you will need to have a *private* conversation with this participant before the trip. You want to find out if they have medications, where they keep them, and what might happen or what they usually do when they have a problem. Feel free to consult with ORGT professional staff if you are uncomfortable with a participant's medical situation. Remember that this information is confidential.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

There is probably no greater concern in the mind of the trip leader than how to deal with an emergency situation. We can do everything in our power to avoid them, but emergency situations will happen, despite ORGT's excellent safety record.

What follows is a basic outline of procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency. It is by no means inclusive. Each sport will have its own special situations. You will have to make judgment calls for which this manual cannot prepare you. The outline below is intended to provide the necessary framework for dealing with these situations.

Injury / Illness

Note: We are assuming here that the person has already been removed from the source of harm (i.e. you have unpinned their boat and have gotten them ashore, or you have gotten them to the top or bottom of the pit/climb).

- ◆ **Assess the scene.** Make sure the victim and others (including yourself) are not in danger of further injury.
- ◆ **Give emergency first aid.** Primary exam: **Airway, Breathing, Circulation, Disability** (head/spine, limb), **Environment**
- ◆ **Assess injuries.** This is essentially the Secondary Exam. **Document your findings and treatments.** There is a form for this purpose in the first aid kit.
- ◆ **Make a decision regarding evacuation.** The Trip Leader is confronted with three choices: whether to continue the trip, evacuate, or send for help. The steps you would follow depend on where you are, the seriousness of the injury, and the talents and size of the group. Evacuations are logistically complex and require lots of people power.

Below are some questions you need to ask yourself before deciding to evacuate. If you can answer "yes" to all of the questions below, then evacuating is probably best.

- Is the group capable and large enough for the evacuation?
- Have you, or anyone in your group, done an evacuation?
- Is the evacuation route terrain easy to moderate?
- Will problem get worse by waiting?
- Can you predetermine the route and roadhead, and send someone to notify the proper authority?
- Will patient's condition stay the same in spite of rough handling?

In summary, if you think the individual can be safely carried out by your group without aggravating existing injuries and without subjecting them to additional dangers, or if time is the greatest hazard, then do it.

- ◆ **Messenger party.** If you're staying put, the messenger party will lead the emergency medical service (EMS) back to you. If you're evacuating, this party will move ahead to notify EMS of the situation, and of your evac route. In either case, they need to:
 - Consist of 3 people if possible, with one person being qualified to lead the party (i.e., instructor)
 - Know exact location of the injured, and be prepared to map or mark your path if necessary
 - Have specific information regarding the condition of the victim
 - Preserve their own safety, and have necessary supplies (i.e. water, clothing, flashlights)
- ◆ **Victim care.** In the meantime, you will want to have someone appointed to be with the victim at all times. Constantly monitor the ABC's as well as general condition and comfort of victim. Document changes in condition and treatments given.

Automobile Accident

The following procedures are from ORGT's Van Driver Manual are appropriate for an auto accident with injuries. They are listed in priority order.

1. **Assess the scene** of the accident. Are there further injuries which can be prevented? Will you endanger yourself or others by attempting to help?
2. If necessary, appoint someone to **deal with traffic**, and someone to **monitor the safety of those who are uninjured**.
3. **Give emergency first aid.** Primary exam: **Airway, Breathing, Circulation, Disability** (head/spine, limb), **Environment**
4. **Send for help.** Direct someone to get qualified help to the scene of the accident. They will need to know: exact location, number injured, and results of primary exams. This person should also notify the local police.
5. **Continue to provide first aid.**
6. **Get data** on all other drivers and all parties involved. For drivers, get name, driver's license number, insurance company and policy number.
7. **Notify appropriate personnel.** Local police should be notified whenever and there is property damage or injury. If a Tech vehicle is involved, Tech police should be notified later.

The ORC should be notified whenever there is **any** type of accident, no matter how minor (for minor fender benders, you can leave voice mail a message or a note at ORGT).

[Click here to return to the Table of Contents](#)

For a major accident, or any accident with an injury requiring medical attention, you need to let GT staff (preferable the ORC) know immediately. If you can't reach the ORC, call the Training Coordinator, or the Director of Recreational Sports. **See the emergency call list in the first aid kit for numbers.**

8. Do Not:

- ◆ Discuss whose fault it was
- ◆ Estimate damages
- ◆ Diagnose injuries (Treat for symptoms, not causes)
- ◆ Attempt to notify family members

PRE-TRIP PREPARATIONS

As the trip leader of an official trip, you will need to do a lot of preparations and logistics prior to the trip. You'll be doing much more than the average participant realizes! Although at times it may seem like drudgery, you will be rewarded by a safer and more pleasant trip.

Registration

Our registration procedure for school trips assures that:

- § All qualified students get a chance to go on official trips
- § Participants get accurate, thorough information
- § Participants sign waivers and med. cards
- § Participants pay
- § The trip has a roster

You should receive (or print out) the trip roster prior to your logistics meeting. During your logistics / class session, you'll need to verify the accuracy of the roster, and that everyone has paid, signed forms, etc. If you run a trip that's not on our calendar, you'll need to be completely responsible for these details. It is especially important that participants are qualified to do the trip, know what to expect, and have done the paperwork.

Instructors

A TL alone cannot effectively supervise a large group, especially if there are beginners. You should be sure to have enough competent instructors to handle logistics and possible problems. ORGT's minimum acceptable instructor / student ratio for almost all sports is 1:4. The Trip Leader can designate instructors as needed. It is expected that you will use good judgement in choosing appropriate people to instruct on your trips.

Be sure to communicate with your instructors. Let them know beforehand what you expect. Discuss logistics, group order, hazard points and what kind of trip you want to lead. Give instructors logistical jobs; it will help them learn. As a TL, you don't have to *do* everything – ***delegate!***

Weather

The Internet provides instant, accurate information regarding weather and conditions. You are expected to know this information, factor it into your decisions, and to make sure that your group is prepared. Monitor the weather for a day or two prior to the trip. If you expect challenging conditions (high river levels, extreme temperatures, thunder storms, high winds) let your group know in advance. **Note:** It's a good idea to mention the possibility of a "No-go" decision, so that you have a clear option on the morning of the trip.

Event Report Forms

Event Report forms, filed at ORGT before you leave, are important because they give enough information to allow us to find you in an emergency. We ask for detailed information regarding your driving and trip routes, emergency resources, nearest hospital, and contact numbers. You will want to fill most of this out **before** your trip. As mentioned previously, you may either be consulting (or providing information for) ORGT's "Emergency Info" book or database.

It is imperative that you file an Event Report, with trip roster attached, at ORGT prior to your departure. Equally important is that the roster is accurate. List yourself and all instructors. Delete all no-shows. We need to know where you went, and with whom!

MISCELLANEOUS LOGISTICS

Vans

As you may know, ORGT trains van drivers. If you have not already been through this training, you may wish to consider it. Otherwise, if you wish to use a van, you must get a trained driver to go on your trip. For more information, see the Van Driver Manual.

Gas Costs

Gas fees are collected for school trips at registration. If you are using a Campus Recreation van, you'll pay for gas via their credit card (see Van Manual). If you are carpooling, we will issue you. **Note:** If you are running a non-school trip (not on the calendar), you'll need to collect the money from the students. In either case, your mission is to divide the money fairly among those who drive. You do the math!

Driver Requirements for Carpool Trips

To drive his/her car on an ORGT trip, a driver should:

- § Have a current U.S. driver's license
- § Be covered by minimum liability insurance required by law
- § Assume responsibility for the mechanical integrity of the car
- § Be 18 or older
- § Have a spare key hidden on the body of the car or with another person on the trip.

Skill Levels and Equipment Use Eligibility

Our skill level and equipment use rules can get complicated. As a TL, you will be expected to know the rules. Please review the ORGT Training Progression section of the Operations Manual, and the General Policy Document. Remind participants of the following key points:

- § Students get first priority
- § You must have health / accident insurance to participate in our programs

[Click here to return to the Table of Contents](#)

- § “Qualing” someone to use our gear doesn’t mean they’re “certified”. It simply means they have been exposed to the minimum amount of information and training we feel necessary to use the gear with judgement.
- § Completing a school does not automatically entitle participants to use our gear. They must also be members of the GT community (student, staff, alumni, or volunteer). The definition of “GT community” is intentionally broad; we want to include anyone who contributes to our program. We try to exclude those who have no affiliation with Tech or ORGT, nor any desire to help or get involved.
- § Novices’ (persons new to the sport) first trip must be with a TL, although it need not be an official trip. The intent here is that they are exposed to the same information that a TL would give to his/her beginner class, including the safety talk(s).

ORGT’s Database

ORGT keeps records on each individual, so that we know what instruction they have had. This is very important to our checkout attendants, since they may be checking out gear to someone they don’t know. As a TL, you may need to make a decision about whether to let a person tag along on your trip. You will want to check their skill level. Or you may want to verify they have a waiver, or get their contact information. For these reasons it is recommended that you familiarize yourself with our database (ORGT staff can help you), so that you can look up an individual’s information.

Another reason to be familiar with our database is this: **As a TL, you are responsible for seeing that your participants get “qualed”**, where applicable. This information cannot be entered automatically from trip rosters, because we need you to make the judgement calls! We ask that you enter it yourself. An alternative to entering it on the computer is to indicate **clearly** on your trip roster who should be “qualed” for what, then turn it in with your event report.

Illegal/Dangerous Behavior

Use of alcohol or controlled substances is not permitted on any ORGT official trip. If a TL allows illegal or potentially dangerous behavior during the trip, and if this behavior can be connected with harm or injury to a participant, then negligence on the part of the TL can be demonstrated in court. Thus it is important to strictly enforce ORGT’s policy on alcohol and controlled substances, and to stop other behavior which may be potentially dangerous.

PARTICIPANT ENJOYMENT

We've discussed safety; now let's talk about fun. Here are some things the trip leader can do to make the trip enjoyable for everyone:

Name Game

Participants tend to enjoy being with people they know. To help participants meet each other, always play "name game" before the trip. Have everyone stand in a circle and tell the group their name, and maybe their favorite ice cream topping. Then have each person name the entire group. Use some ingenuity to dream up variations on this theme to make it more interesting.

Keep playing the name game until you and your instructors know everyone by name. This knowledge can be especially important in an emergency situation when it is necessary to give orders directly to specific people and perhaps to find out who is present and who is missing.

Physical/Mental Comfort

People who are cold and miserable are not enjoying themselves very much - so be on the lookout for personal discomfort and be ready with suggestions to rectify it. You should be sure that extra protective clothing, water, and food is brought on the trip for those caught unprepared. Check in with each person at least once during your trip.

Return Time

Most students like to get back from an outing at about the time they were told. Wear a watch and keep the trip on time. This way the participants don't get stressed about possibly getting home late. For day trips and especially river trips, you need to watch the time so that you arrive at your destination before dark.

Positive Reinforcement

Positive reinforcement is the number one thing a trip leader can do "on the spot" to make a trip more enjoyable for the participants. Be on the lookout for good or skillful performance, or for a job well done. Go out of your way to give participants a verbal "pat on the back" when you see them doing something well. This has several positive and beneficial effects:

- Helps participants to improve their skills
- Helps build self-confidence
- People tend to like (and cooperate with) folks who compliment them.
- It's contagious! It improves the overall mood of the trip.

Welfare of the Group vs. Welfare of the Individual

While leading an official trip, the TL assumes some responsibility for **all** the people on the trip. Despite your personal preferences, you should be careful not to give so much attention to a few people that the leadership for the trip as a whole is diminished. In general, the trip leader should try to make the welfare of the group take precedence over the welfare of the individuals. For example, on a river trip, rather than allowing one or two people who want to play to slow the whole group down, the TL would encourage them to speed up or change the structure of the group so that they could get off the river on time. However, if the group's action led to unacceptably severe consequences on behalf of an individual, then probably the individual's welfare would take precedence over that of the group. This would be the case if an individual was severely injured - then his/her needs would come before that of the group.

A FINAL WORD

This manual has been prepared to help you to be aware of the important aspects of leading a safe and fun official trip for ORGT. It communicates what ORGT expects from you when you are acting in the role of TL. Use this information along with your knowledge and experience to make good decisions. Remember that others are relying on your judgement, and learning from your example. As a role model, it is imperative that you make conservative decisions where safety is concerned.

As an up-and-coming trip leader, you should remember a few things:

- § Being a TL is a learning experience, not a destination.
- § Many alumni TLs say their experiences with ORGT were life-changing.

We hope that being a TL will prove to be a rewarding, fun and educational experience for you. We appreciate the energy you have devoted to ORGT.

ORGT Trip Leader Manual

Appendix A: Trip leader Checklist

At the Logistics / Class Session

- § Verify that students have registered and paid fees
- § Verify that students have waivers and med. cards
- § Give thorough description of trip
- § Specify meeting start time and approximate return time
- § Let students know what to bring
- § Discuss transportation

1-2 Days Before the Trip

- § Verify van and/or gas money logistics with ORGT staff
- § Do van preparations if applicable (see Van Driver Manual)
- § Check first aid kit
- § Check equipment (participant, safety and repair)
- § Find out emergency info and phone #'s
- § Confirm roster and complete Event Report form
- § Review med. cards
- § Monitor weather

Morning of the Trip

- § Make Go/No-Go decision
- § Do van preparations if applicable (see Van Driver Manual)
- § Put med. cards in first aid kit
- § Load first aid kit, repair kit, safety equipment
- § Ensure that participants have the right equipment
- § Do fees and paperwork with “tag-alongs” as needed
- § Sign out on whiteboard
- § File Event Report form with updated roster
- § Play name game
- § Give safety talk, including “you-don’t-have-to-do-this” disclaimer
- § Discuss the route and stopping points with drivers

At the Trail Head/Put-In/Cave/Rock Face

- § Review safety talk. Remind individuals to make own decisions
- § Be sure first aid kit, repair and safety equipment are with the party
- § Tell all participants where the first aid kit is located
- § Establish point/sweep, buddy system, etc.

During The Trip

- § Keep group on schedule to reach destination by appropriate time
- § Know where all participants are at all times
- § Check in with each participant at least once
- § Remind participants of their options at hazard points
- § Maintain group structure
- § Re-group as needed and count heads often!
- § Remember to give positive reinforcement!

After the Trip

- § Take a head count
- § See that all equipment, both group and personal, gets loaded
- § Be sure all drivers know route to dinner stop and back to Tech

Back at ORGT

- § Sign in on the whiteboard
- § “Qual” participants in database or via note on roster
- § File roster and event report
- § Supervise unloading and check-in of equipment
- § Remove med. Cards from first aid kit
- § Do van logistics if applicable (see Van Driver Manual)
- § Tell participants how to stay involved with ORGT!
- § Have a “debrief” session with your instructors
- § Lock up!

ORGT Trip Leader Manual

Appendix B: First Aid Kit Contents

Section 1

- Call list with 2 quarters - important phone numbers
- 3 pair latex gloves (medium)
- 1 first aid booklet
- 3 patient assessment forms
- 1 roll waterproof tape
- 1 tube hydrocortisone
- 1 hypothermia thermometer
- 1 pencil
- 1 lighter
- 1 tweezers
- 1 SAM splint
- 10 ibuprofen
- 10 aspirin
- 10 Tylenol
- 10 Benedryl
- 12 Pepto-bismol
- Directions- Indications/Contraindications for use of medications
- 1 roll of duct tape
- 2 tampons

Section 2

- 1 pocket mask
- 2 triangular bandages
- 4 iodine prep pads
- 1 bottle of povidone iodine solution
- 2 blanket pins
- 1 maxi pad
- 1 ACE wrap
- 1 irrigation syringe

Section 3

- 12 small Band-Aids
- 6 large Band-Aids
- 12 4 x 4 dressings
- 1 package of steri-strips or butterfly Band-Aids
- 1 sheet of mole foam
- Trauma shears