Venture Trip Staff Manual


Venture: Providing Transformative Group Experiences Using Tailored Challenges and Guided Reflection
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Acknowledgments

Many people have helped the long journey of developing a comprehensive staff manual. Starting around 1982, Lee Carol Giduz pulled together various pieces of information, filled in the gaps and put the first edition together in usable form. Lee Reading and Dee Edelman wrote much of the original material. This most recent edition contains much of the original materials plus updates and additions. Kim Judy, Associate Director from 1994 to 2004 made many contributions. Sandy Kohn, Director since 1987, has tweaked and added stuff over the years, was responsible for the Fifth Edition. Marion McClure, Assistant Director since 2011, was primarily responsible for this Sixth Edition, with the help and guidance of Sandy Kohn, Brian Capron, Scott Moulton, and Dave Sperry. Jordan Witteveen largely completed the new Equipment and Games sections, for which Marion is eternally grateful.

Venture is heavily indebted to the North Carolina Outward Bound School for use of their Instructor Handbook, to many of the Outdoor Program at other Universities in the University of North Carolina System who freely shared their manuals, to Georgia College and State University who made their manual and many of their forms available on-line, and to the Association for Experiential Education for providing the original impetus for writing this. The Sixth Edition draws information and inspiration from the University of New Hampshire’s outdoor education program and from the Harvard First-Year Outdoor Program and its Leader Handbook.
Changes in Policy

Informing staff of changes in policy, procedure, and practice:
When incidents happen or new information is acquired that cause us to make changes to our practices, procedures or policies, these changes need to be communicated to all pertinent staff in a timely manner. The procedures for doing so shall include:

1. Identify which staff needs to be informed.
2. Compose an email that includes the changes and the rationale for these and use the appropriate distribution lists to disseminate it. This email should be distributed prior to the next program when these new practices, procedures or policies will be used.
3. Add the changes to our on-line manuals; and date these changes in the manual so we can identify when they were instituted.
4. Review these changes orally at the next appropriate gathering of staff.

Of special note regarding changes in this Sixth Edition:
• Some procedures information from older versions of the manual (versions 1-4) was removed prior to the Fifth Edition to make that trip staff manual more focused on what is needed by our trip field staff. Some of this information has been re-added to the 6th edition to ensure that this “institutional knowledge” does not get lost.
• Much was also cut from the 5th to the 6th edition, to keep the manual a manageable and readable length. The staff worked to distinguish between necessary information for a manual, and that which is nice to know but does not necessarily need to appear in writing. Much of the latter type of information was deleted from this edition.
• The manual has been reorganized to group information of similar themes together, and to promote a logical flow of information. General information about outdoor leadership is presented first, followed by activity-specific policies and procedures, then equipment and games. Emergency Procedures are placed at the end of manual for easy access.
• The general Outdoor Leadership guidelines section has been greatly expanded.
• The Trip Procedures section has been revised significantly to reflect the reality of how trips happen.
• Many of the Activity-Specific procedures have been changed to reflect more current standards, especially the rock climbing section.
• Chapter 4: Equipment and Chapter 5: Games are completely new. These sections are meant to be resources for leaders; this manual strives to provide necessary information but also interesting and helpful information for leaders.
• Emergency Procedures have been updated since the 5th edition. This 6th edition reflects the current Emergency & Communication Procedures.
Dear Venture Leader

Welcome to the wonderful world of trip leadership! We believe that trip leadership can be one of the most rewarding and challenging experiences of your time at UNC Charlotte and beyond. Through your hard work and commitment to the Venture program, we are able to offer memorable, challenging, and meaningful experiences to members of the UNC Charlotte and great Charlotte community. We hope you find your experience as a trip leader fun, enjoyable, and rewarding.

Note carefully that while trip leadership is and can be a lot of fun, it is also a weighty responsibility. Your ability to teach, communicate, assess and manage risk, and use good judgment are necessary for a fun and incident-free trip. The development of these skills takes time and experience, and we hope you will strive for continual improvement throughout your time with the Venture program and beyond.

This manual is meant to serve as a resource guide as you train and lead trips with Venture. It contains a wealth of important information, some of which is required for you to know, but much of which can help guide your decision-making and give you tools for a fun and successful trip. It is not a comprehensive book of everything to know for Venture or outdoor leadership, but it surely gets you started. We encourage you to spend the time to carefully read the manual, and re-read it if you find yourself forgetting important policy and/or procedure.

This manual is not intended as a substitute for training and practice; but rather as a supplement. The manual may help you remember something covered in a class or on a trip, or may provide some additional background or detail to a topic covered in a more formal training setting. Reading this manual in lieu of other training will not make you a qualified outdoor leader!

It is not expected that this manual be carried in the field. However, when an appropriately sized field manual comes available, it is expected that you carry that field manual with you on any Venture trip.

Have wonderful trips!

Venture Core Staff
Chapter 1: The Big Picture
This chapter will help Venture trip leaders to understand the context in which they are working, both within the Venture program and within the field of outdoor and experiential education programming. Leaders will gain insight into the mission which guides Venture trips, and the larger concepts of leadership, risk management, teaching, and ethics which guide our practice.

Policy and Procedure
The main focus of this manual is **Procedural**.
- The procedural portions include how to do various tasks, how to make things work smoothly, and systems and checklists to improve organization and efficiency. Procedural suggestions are intended as useful guidelines and are not mandatory requirements. When in doubt, follow the procedure. When judgment and/or communication indicate otherwise, deviate as needed.

Parts of this manual also address **Policy**.
- These are **highlighted in bold print**. All policies **must** be followed, and are **not** intended as guidelines (unless there exist serious extenuating circumstances). **Any deviation from policy must be documented in the written Post-Trip Report and communicated directly to the Assistant Director (Trips) and/or Director during the week immediately following the trip. It may be necessary to complete an Accident/Incident/Near Miss Report, depending on the situation.**

Venture & Venture Trips in Context

Venture’s Mission & Guiding Principles

Venture Mission Statement (February 16, 2006)
The mission of the Venture program enhances the educational mission of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. We foster student development using experiential, “hands on” learning.

We engage people in meaningful and challenging experiences to address individual, leadership, community, and environmental issues with a goal of increasing their capacity to serve.

- We strive to be a catalyst in increase students’ sense of self-worth and personal responsibility.
- We provide opportunities for the development of leadership qualities through trainings and positions of responsibility.
- We design activities for small groups in which participants experience a sense of community, open communication, and teamwork.
- We regard the development of stewardship for the earth as an inherent component of all we do. We promote awareness and sense of personal responsibility for preserving the natural environment.
- Through service, participants can actively contribute to their communities, while creating connections, learning compassion, and developing character.
- Our ultimate commitment is to provide transformative experiences for individuals and groups through the judicious application of tailored challenges, support, and reflection.

Venture: Providing Transformative Group Experiences Using Tailored Challenges & Guided Reflection

Venture Guiding Principles Statement (February 16, 2006)
The Venture Program affirms the following guiding principles:

**Experiential Learning**
We actively engage people in meaningful and challenging experiences. These hands-on experiences are consciously designed to enhance growth. The goal is to empower individuals to take broader control of their lives. Processing the experience is equally as important as the experience itself. The physical and social environments can be shaped and managed to enhance learning. We believe people learn best in an atmosphere of fun, lightness, safety, and support. Venture strives to create and provide physically and emotionally safe environments, though participants also carry significant responsibility for maintaining safety.

**Personal Development**
When confronted with challenges, individuals and groups are impelled to make decisions. There is much to be learned from reflecting on the choices made. We offer individuals opportunities to move out of their comfort zone and to accept greater levels of challenge. By overcoming challenges, individuals can move beyond their perceived limitation and increase personal qualities such as an improved sense of self-worth and self-confident. A series of successes builds one's capacity to function more effectively under stress. The environments and skills to which we introduce people increase their ability to choose active, healthy, enriching lives. Giving participants the opportunity to choose their own level of challenge is both educationally sound and ethically imperative. As individuals realize the impact of their choices, they increase their capacity to take greater responsibility for their lives. Participants can transfer lessons learned from brief but powerful experiences into the rest of their lives.

**Group Involvement**
There is great value in learning to work with and trust others. Small communities or teams provide a powerful social environment for learning and growth. Small group interactions provide opportunities for individuals to improve their interpersonal, communication, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. There is value in groups reflecting on their dynamics and interactions, recognizing that task and process are equally important. Compassion can be developed through working with diverse individuals in challenging situations.

**Leadership Development**
Small group work provides a rich learning laboratory for observing and testing leadership styles and approaches. Everyone can improve their leadership with guidance, training, practice, and opportunities to reflect on their experience. Compassion is a necessary requirement of an effective leader. Leadership experiences provide opportunities for individuals to more clearly see the impact of their choices on others. By reflecting on the impact of decisions, judgment is enhanced. Character development parallels leadership development.

**Natural Environment**
There is value in increasing one’s sense of connection with self, with others, and with the natural world. Spending time in natural environments offers rich opportunities for connecting with something greater than ourselves. We want our participants to recognize that the natural environment is a limited and fragile resource requiring care and stewardship.

Service
We value acting for the greater good. Contributing to our communities is a way for us to give back for all we have received. Giving of oneself builds connections with all involved. Helping others builds compassion. Choosing to commit time, effort, and sweat builds character. Accepting leadership responsibility enables one to offer service (the servant leadership model).

Venture History, in brief
The Venture Program was initiated in 1971 by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte as an adapted Outward Bound program, after a group of UNC Charlotte faculty, staff, and students participants in a specially contracted, three-week intensive wilderness experience at the North Carolina Outward Bound School in the summer of 1970. The original Outward Bound instructor for this program was Jed Williamson.

Venture has evolved into a year-round experiential learning program with its own professional staff, sponsored jointly by the Division of Student Affairs and the Kinesiology Department (College of Health and Human Services). The original academic course, “Wilderness Experience,” remains in a modified form, along with many other academic and development offerings for the UNC Charlotte and great Charlotte community.

Timeline of Program Highlights
Summer, 1970 Group of faculty, staff, and students attend NC Outward Bound trip
Spring, 1971 UNC Charlotte creates Venture, and Outward Bound-type program, as part of the institution’s academic curriculum
Summer, 1971 “Wilderness Experience” is first taught
Early 1970s Venture offers no-credit backpacking and rock climbing trips
Late 1970s Venture adds canoeing, kayaking, and biking trips
Assistant Director position added
August, 1978 A “Group Initiatives Course” is constructed

Early 1980s Caving trips added
Graduate assistant position added
Late 1980s Sea kayaking trips added
Graduate assistant position becomes full-time (9 month), permanent position
1988 Kayaking (1 credit) and orienteering (1 credit) academic classes taught for the first time
1980s Average of approximately 30 Group Initiatives Course programs and 25 trips per year

Fall, 1990 A High Ropes Course using a static belay is constructed in trees.
Rock climbing (1 credit) academic class taught for the first time
Spring, 1991 The Mobile Initiatives Program is greatly expanded
Spring, 1992  The Adventure/Challenge Course Activities (1 credit) academic class taught for the first time
Spring, 1993  The VOLTAGE student leaders program is initiated
May, 1995  The Venture program becomes the fifth program nationally to be accredited by the Association for Experiential Education (AEE). Of the first five program who received accreditation by AEE, the Venture program became on the second college and/or university nationally to receive this honor (Cornell University being the first)
1996  Canoeing (1 credit), Intro to Outdoor Adventure (1 credit), and Wilderness Trip Leading academic classes are taught for the first time
1997  Add 4th full-time (9 month) position
February, 1998  An indoor rock climbing wall opened in the Student Activities Center
November, 1998  The Venture program becomes re-accredited by AEE, thus becoming the college and/or university outdoor program in the nation to hold the honor of longest accredited.
1999  Two Assistant Director position become 10.5 months of employment (up from 9 months)
1990s  Average of approximately 145 challenge course programs and 22 trips per year
2001  New van restrictions due to roll-over concerns reduces the size of trips
August, 2002  The original Group Initiative Course and High Ropes Course are deconstructed to allow space for a new Facilities Management Compound at UNC Charlotte
September, 2002  An Odyssey Course (High Team Challenge Course) and a new Low Team Challenge Course are built. Some replacement funds came from Facilities Management, but this state-of-the-art challenge course facility would not have been possible without the generous support of the Cone University Center
2003  Venture is re-accredited by AEE
Challenge Course Facilitation Class is taught for the first time
2004-5  Strongest year thus far for challenge course programs
Two Assistant Director position become 11 months of employment (up from 10.5)
2005-6  Update all academic courses
Two academic courses change from 1 credit to 2
2006-7  High Challenge Course Facilitation academic is taught for the first time
2008  Graduate Assistantship position is added from state funds to support Venture’s student development efforts
Venture is re-accredited by AEE
2000s  Average of approximately 225 challenge course program, 16 trips, and 68 open days at the climbing wall per year
Summer, 2010  Iliad addition to the High Team Challenge Course is constructed
Spring, 2012  Raft Guiding class is taught in conjunction with the US National Whitewater Center
Fall, 2012  Whitewater kayaking class is taught in conjunction with the US National Whitewater Center
Spring, 2013  Selected academic courses are edited and credits changed in anticipation of Minor in Outdoor Adventure Leadership
Summer, 2013  Pilot of SOAR Outdoor, outdoor orientation program
Fall, 2013  Launch of Minor in Outdoor Adventure Leadership
General Outdoor Leadership Guidelines & Philosophy

Introduction
To be an instructor, you must also be a leader and a role model. Many participants will place absolute trust in you; they will have complete faith in your judgment and will often quickly develop close emotional ties with you. With your guidance, participants may have some of the most memorable experiences of their lives.

Assuming the role of instructor can become an awesome responsibility. Therefore, when you accept the position, you must take it very seriously. You must be mindful of the impact your actions will have on your participants and be aware of this factor in preparing for and conducting a trip. You must impart, through your behavior, the following values, all of which are integral to the Venture philosophy:

• Belief in and commitment to high-level wellness
• Openness and honesty
• Respect for the individual (manners, language, challenge by choice)
• Respect for diversity
• Respect for the natural environment
• Personal cleanliness and camp hygiene
• Respect for equipment and personal property
• Physical fitness

The Full Value Contract
It is recommended that some time be taken at the pre-trip meeting or towards the beginning of a trip to review and discuss expectations for group interactions on the trip. Depending on the length and intensity of the trip, this conversation may be a brief, instructor-led conversation about respect, or may be a lengthier group conversation and creation of a “Full Value Contract.” Either way, it is expected that instructors teach and model to give all group members their “Full Value.” A general “Full Value Contract” includes, but is not limited, to the following:

• Don’t discount yourself; you have value and your ideas are important
• Don’t discount others
• Don’t discount the group
• Don’t discount Venture
• Speak your truth
• Be willing to listen

(Special thanks to the Harvard FOP Manual for the information included in this section.)

Risk Management
Venture recognizes it cannot ensure “safety” on our trips; however, risk-management is at all times our highest priority. All leaders must constantly be aware of their surroundings, group, and individuals, and must make judgments based on minimizing risk, even if these decisions are unpopular. This section contains both specific steps that can be taken to minimize risk, and conceptual frameworks of accidents and risk management that may help to raise awareness of risks and guide judgment when in doubt. Venture encourages (or requires) trip staff to:

• Discuss and give participants adequate time to read and understand the waiver before signing it. Participants should have a working knowledge of the objective hazards of the activity they are joining and should participate with full knowledge of the inherent risks involved.
• Make sure you have access to the Medical History Forms and Workshop Report with emergency numbers while in the field.
• Review all medical forms prior to a trip and follow-up with participants (in a private discussion) if you have any questions or concerns regarding the forms. A doctor does review and sign off on our forms, but as a leader you are responsible for knowing any disclosed medical issues, how they may affect the participant and trip, and if any action may be required on your part.
• Always present a briefing to the participants before any new activity.
• Discuss goals before an activity, and ensure that the safety briefing reflects these goals.

Leaders should be aware of and familiar with several models of how accidents happen, and take concrete steps to avoid accidents when in a potentially hazardous combination of conditions. It is clear that the ultimate well-being of participants in adventure programs rests upon the extent to which we understand and control not only unsafe acts and conditions, but errors in judgment as well:
• Hale’s “Dynamics of Accidents Theory” indicates that the more “Environmental Hazards” intersect with “Human Factors,” the higher the potential for an accident. For example, not paying attention (human factor) may contribute to an accident when in a rapid (environmental hazard), but may not lead to an accident when not intersecting with this hazard (i.e. in a calm water environment).
• The activities or situations which are reported as most often causing or being a factor in accidents are (according to Hale, A., 1988, National Safety Network Annual Review)
  o Rushing to meet a schedule
  o Fatigue, being overtired, particularly in the afternoon (3-5pm)
  o Lack of attention
  o Lack of supervision, intervention, or communication
  o Traveling in a vehicle
  o Moving water
  o Seeking novelty out of a routine situation
  o Poor judgment by asking too much of participants
  o Unrealistic planning
  o Trying to meet others’ expectations
  o Equipment: design, condition, improper use
  o Not well-thought-out free time activities
  o Too familiar a routine in an unfamiliar situation
  o Improper preparation of participants appropriate to their levels of thinking, judgment, and coordination (remember you are most likely working with beginners!)
• The “Principle Causes of Accident in Outdoor Pursuits,” a matrix developed and revised by Dan Meyer and Jed Williamson indicated that unsafe conditions, when combined with unsafe acts, and with judgment errors, increase the potential for accidents. Below are some examples in each category. The more factors present, the higher the potential for accidents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unsafe Conditions</th>
<th>Unsafe Acts</th>
<th>Judgment Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swift water</td>
<td>Poor acts</td>
<td>Desire to please others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loose/falling rock</td>
<td>Improper procedure</td>
<td>Sticking to a schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals/plants</td>
<td>Inadequate food/water</td>
<td>Distraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improper clothing/equipment</td>
<td>Unsafe speed</td>
<td>Unexpected situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unexpected weather</td>
<td>Ineffective instruction</td>
<td>Fatigue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the event of an accident, follow the Venture Accident Procedures (refer to this section in this Staff Manual) and use the Patient Assessment Form to document your actions.

Situational Leadership & Group Dynamics

Important to note is that leadership style may need to change based on factors including, but not limited to, safety issues, ability of participants, motivation of participants, time in the trip (beginning or end), and trip situations/activities. We all tend to have a preferred style of leadership, but must be willing and able to adjust this style based on the needs of the group and the situation.

A basic theory of Situational Leadership is derived from the work of Hersey and Blanchard, 1982. This theory roughly defines how directive leaders need to be with their groups, based largely on participant ability, motivation, and also concern for relationships. Refer to the diagram below:

TELLING: When a group does not have the competence to make safe decisions, nor the motivation to join with the leader in discussing and understanding options. This style is most appropriate at the beginning of a trip (when competence is low) and/or when the group is in a dangerous situation. This style is known as a "high task, low relationship" leadership style, as it is effective at accomplishing tasks, but does not put effort towards developing and fostering relationships in the process of accomplishing tasks.

SELLING: When the group is motivated to make decisions, but does not necessarily have the expertise to make safe choices. In this situation, the leader will engage the group in the decision-making process, but ultimately maintains the authority to make the decision; it becomes the leader’s task to “sell” participants on why his/her decision is the best. This style is known as “high task, high relationship” as it is effective at achieving a desired task outcome, but also works to develop relationships in the process.

PARTICIPATING: When the group has the knowledge and ability to make decisions, but is unmotivated to do so, a participating style may be employed. This style is similar to “selling” in that the leader engages the group in a discussion about the decision, but in this case the leader abdicates responsibility for the final decision, instead leaving the choice up to the group. This style is known as “low task, high relationship” as it does not take responsibility for the task, but does care for relationships.

DELEGATING: When the group is motivated and confident, the leader may delegate full responsibility for decision making. This style is known as “low task, low relationship” as it does not actively take
responsibility or engage in either the task completion or relationship maintenance. The leader will rather take an observatory role.

In a more basic format, leadership may exist on a sliding scale from autocratic to abdicratic:

← Autocratic --------------------------------- Democratic --------------------------------- → Abdicratic

The autocratic leader takes responsibility for making decisions and organizing the completion of tasks. The democratic leader involves the group in decision-making and assignment of tasks. The abdicratic leader gives full responsibility for decisions and tasks to the group.

Making a decision about which leadership style is most appropriate is based upon a number of factors including, but not limited to:

• The situation, hazards, and potential risks at hand. As a rule of thumb, the more dangerous a situation, the more a leader will need to "tell"/be an "autocratic" leader. Finding yourself on an exposed peak in a lightning storm is no time to take on a lengthy group decision-making process.
• The consequences of a poor choice. Deciding what time to eat lunch may have some negative consequences, but will most likely not affect the safety of the group. Deciding to cross a stream directly upstream from a strainer has potentially devastating consequences.
• The group’s competence. Does the group have the skills and experience necessary to make an informed choice?
• The relative importance of getting the task done and caring for/fostering relationships.
• The group’s Stage of Development
  o Tuckman’s (1965) basic stages of group development are:
    ▪ Forming—coming together and forming initial bonds
    ▪ Norming—setting group rules, structures, and roles
    ▪ Storming—conflict, pushing against established rules and roles, questioning boundaries and leaders (note this stage may occur at any time, and groups may continually cycle through norming and storming, without necessarily reaching the “performing” stage)
    ▪ Performing—functioning well together in task and relationship
    ▪ Adjourning—ending of the group and transitioning out of the group and group roles
  o Venture trips are typically not long enough for a group to fully progress through these stages of development, but leaders should nonetheless be aware of the stages, and make a general assessment of which stage the group may be in at any point in time.
  o A forming group requires a more autocratic/telling leader. A more democratic/participatory/selling leadership style is needed when a group is norming or storming. A performing group requires a more abdicratic/delegatory leader.

Co-Leadership and Working with Others
In addition to working with participants, Venture leaders work with each other. The co-leading or tri-leading relationship dynamic is very important and often sets the tone for interaction and relationships on the trip. If co-leaders do not demonstrate care and respect for each other, participants will most likely not treat each other with care and respect. Be acutely aware of the tone and example you and your fellow staff are setting.
The Venture Assistant Director (Trips) will work to the best of his/her ability to pair staff together who complement each others’ skills and who are likely to have a successful working relationship. However, due to scheduling conflicts and specific skill sets, sometimes co-leading relationships may not be as natural or smooth. Regardless, Venture considers getting along with your co-leaders “part of the job.” A wise director once wrote “you must, and you can, get along on the trip. Co-leaders need to talk regularly even when there don’t seem to be any pressing issues; you need to listen to each other and express views as openly as possible...Decisions almost always should be reached together, except when some emergency or crisis requires instantaneous action...You are partners, comrades, mates, buddies, a team...so work together!” (Thanks to Brent Bell & FOP SC 2003 for the preceding nugget of wisdom).

It is suggested that co-leaders spend some time before the trip (typically at the staff meeting) going over some parts of the Co-Leader Inventory (included in the appendix of this manual). This is a lengthy questionnaire that will help you get on the same page about strengths, weaknesses, and leadership styles. It is not necessary to always complete the full inventory, but at minimum it is suggested co-leaders come to an understanding on:

- Differences/similarities in personality
- Differences/similarities in leadership style
- When and how to communicate with each other and with the group
- Strategies for potential disagreements or rough patches in the working relationship
- Technical strengths and weaknesses
- Goals—what is each leader most excited about getting out of this experience?

Conflicts may still occur even with the best planning. When handling an interpersonal conflict, either with a co-leader or between trip participants, keep in mind:

- Be direct and timely. Addressing small things quickly can avoid larger problems forming in the future.
- Use I Statements and explain how another’s behaviors are affecting you. Avoid assuming things about others’ intentions.
- Conflict is often best addressed in private.
- Give each other the benefit of the doubt.

Before, during, and after the trip Venture expects:

- On-going communication among the leadership team.
- Staff to spread out among participants.
- All staff to refrain from initiating an intimate relationship with fellow staff while on a trip. It is also inappropriate in an already established relationship to focus a great deal of energy on this relationship during the trip. Such attention is exclusive and unprofessional, and detracts from staff members’ abilities to serve their participants.
- Staff to give and receive feedback respectfully and graciously. Remember feedback is a gift that helps us understand how we come across to the world. No post-trip meeting is complete without giving each other feedback. Staff are encouraged to fill out a Co-Instructor Evaluation for each staff team member.

**Teaching Techniques**

Remember that Venture is not a guide service! As leaders, do your best to teach and involve participants in all parts of the trip, from the outdoor activities themselves to the basic camping skills
that often go along with our trips. When teaching, Venture recommends leaders keep a few basic tenets in mind:

- Remember the basics: PPPPP (Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance) and DDD (Describe, Demonstrate, Do), and demonstrating Whole-Part-Whole
- The phases of instruction are:
  - Introduction: Plan to get the participants’ attention and to convince them of the need for knowledge
  - Presentation:
    - Speak clearly
    - Stress important points
    - Maintain eye contact with the group
    - Appeal to multiple learning styles—visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic
    - Check periodically for understanding and encourage questions
    - Be selective and prioritize rather than trying to cover too much; focus on 2-5 key points students should concentrate on
  - Practice: Encourage participants to learn by doing. Observe and provide feedback to participants
  - Application: Provide situations for participants to perform their new skills under actual conditions.

Ethical Issues

Venture expects staff will act in a manner that is within the boundaries of their competence, will act with integrity and responsibility, and will respect the rights, dignity, and welfare of all individuals. Generally Venture trusts leaders to use their best judgment and do their best to act ethically in all work-related situations. There are a few specific issues which merit further and more specific guidance:

- Dual Relationships. Leaders must be aware of their influential position with respect to participants and avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of such persons. Because of this power dynamic, leaders are expected to make every effort to avoid dual relationships with participants that could impair professional judgment or point participants in situations in which they may be easily influenced or exploited (i.e. intimate, romantic, or business relationships). When dual relationships do come to exist, staff are expected to take appropriate precautions to ensure judgment is not impaired and no exploitation occurs (taken from Ethical Guidelines for Adventure Alternatives Professional Group of AEE). Specific expectations include:
  - **Sexual intimacy with a participant is prohibited during a trip**
  - Staff will not initiate or encourage romantic involvement with a participant during a trip (avoid hitting on participants)
  - Leaders who subsequently engage in sexual intimacy with a past participant bear the burden of proving that there is no form of exploitation.
  - If a relationship exists prior to a trip, staff will not focus extra attention or energy on this partner during a trip. It would be expected that the other participants would not even be able to tell for sure that a romantic relationship existed. Expectations would be somewhat different for married couples (no need to hide the relationship), but still extra energy should not be focused on the relationship during the trip.
  - If the relationship is at a point where it needs a great deal of energy or work, it is probably not appropriate for both parties to participate on the trip. If this is a concern, please talk with the Director.
• Confidentiality. Staff respect the right of participants to decide the extent to which confidential material is made public, except where otherwise mandated by law or to prevent a clear immediate danger to a person or persons (taken from Ethical Guidelines for Adventure Alternatives Professional Group of AEE). Confidential information includes but is not limited to:
  o Health status
  o Mental health
  o Sexual orientation
  o Academic performance
  o Traumatic Experience

Legal Issues
Like any outdoor program, Venture is not immune to the possibility of legal problems. Our objective is to minimize exposure to legal problems to the greatest possible degree without compromising our basic goals. To help achieve that objective, it is the staff’s responsibility to understand and follow this manual, to use good judgment, and to keep in mind the following:

• Participants are entitled to know the nature and scope of risks involved in an activity before the commencement of the activity. You must have their informed consent. Informed consent means that they have been informed of risks associated with the activity, that they understand these risks, and that they are participating in the activity voluntarily. Participants indicate informed consent by signing the Liability Waiver prior to going on the trip. Furthermore, to ensure a proper standard of care, you must brief all participants on risks and safety procedures on site before engaging in any hazardous activity
• Fully inspect all equipment before use.
• This staff manual is the standard against which your conduct will be judged. If an accident occurs because you did not follow Venture’s policies, barring substantial reasons for the deviation, your conduct may well be judged to have been unreasonable or negligent. See the “Policy and Procedure” section earlier in this chapter for additional comments on when to deviate from policy.

• Some specific problems areas with profound legal implications include:
  o Driving university vehicles: This is a high-risk activity involving a large number of persons. Exercise greater caution than if you were driving alone. *No one may drive the vehicle for more than four (4) hours without a rest. Generally, you should switch drivers every 4 hours at a minimum.
  o See Driving Manual for further guidelines and policies for vehicle safety.
  o *All passengers must wear seatbelts when the vehicle is in motion. This is North Carolina State Law.
  o *Staff may not be under the influence of alcohol or recreational drugs while on duty (note that “duty” includes after participants have gone to bed and overnight on multi-day trips). Any prior use that could show up in a blood test while on duty could put the program and our participants at risk. Such behavior or test results are grounds for dismissal.

Processing
Purpose: To provide the opportunity for...
• To stimulate learning and growth
• To create a positive group environment
• Sharing feelings and thoughts
• Measuring and evaluating progress towards objectives
• Clarifying needs
• Giving & receiving feedback
• Assessing the significance of the experience is one’s everyday life
• Developing group cohesion
• To allow instructors and participants the opportunity to further develop relationships through hearing each other's feelings and to provide the opportunity to explore interests, issues, or problems on a personal level.

Guidelines for Group Discussions:
• Ensure participants are comfortable, both physically and emotionally, so that their attention can be focused on the discussion.
• Provide sufficient time for discussion.
• Some time each day should be set aside for debriefing the day's activity and/or checking the progress of the group. Generally this discussion should take the form of an evening meeting.
• Don’t ask the big questions first. Start with the concrete (what happened), then move to the abstract (what does it mean?), and then make connections (how does it apply in other situations?).
• Set ground rules for meetings, such as confidentiality, listening respectfully, and sharing by choice
• The direction of the group discussion is important. Ask open questions and give people space to create and share their own answers. Some sample questions which may be helpful are:
  o Recap the events
  o How did you feel?
  o What were your fears and/or expectations? Were they met? Overcome? Justified?
  o What were some highlights or lowlights?
  o How did the group work together? Who were the leaders? Why do you think they stood out?
  o If awards were to be given for today's efforts, what would they be and who would be the nominees for those awards?
  o What did you contribute? Did you learn anything new about yourself? What have you learned that you can take into your everyday life?
• Some fun ideas for how to change up your evening meetings (from the typical high/low) are…
  o What part of a car did you feel like today?
  o What food (or fruit, animal, article of clothing, appliance..etc) best represents your day and why?
  o Give group members 10 minutes to find and bring back something that represents how they feel about the day
  o Have everyone make a face that shows how they are feeling at the moment
• The final group discussion is an important part of the trip. It should not be omitted or done in too cursory a fashion. It should take place after the last scheduled activity and serve to bring the group experience to a conclusion. Provide a space for appropriate feedback, for reflection, and for people to express their feelings about the trip.

Instructor Debriefing—please see the next chapter
Chapter 2: Trip Procedures
This chapter is primarily concerned with the effective planning, executing, and concluding of Venture trips. It applies to all trips, regardless of activity or length. This chapter will help leaders to set themselves up for success before a trip, and will include some important information about running and concluding a smooth trip. Information regarding specific activities and related policies and procedures will be found in the next chapter.

Pre-Trip Procedures
There is always a lot of preparation for Venture trips. As a staff team (core staff and students) we work hard to ensure that tasks do not fall through the cracks. The division of responsibilities and procedures outlines here will help ensure all tasks have been completed in a satisfactory manner prior to the commencement of the trip. It should be noted, however, that following the steps outlined in this manual is no substitute for good communication with the Assistant Director (Trips), with co-leaders, and with logistics staff. Many times responsibilities need to shift due to scheduling conflicts, extenuating circumstances, or the unique nature of a trip. All parties involved (core staff, student leaders, and logistics workers) should take shared responsibility for trip preparation, and should communicate regularly in the time leading up to a trip regarding task delegation and completion.

Trip Scheduling, Staffing, and Marketing
The Assistant Director (Trips) holds the primary responsibility for designing, coordinating staffing, and marketing a robust trips schedule each semester. All decisions should be made with input from students and in conjunction with other Core staff members. During the prior semester (and into the beginning of the current semester) the Assistant Director (Trips) will:

- Determine dates, locations, and activities for trips and meetings
- Write trip descriptions document, and send to the SUAR Marketing team
- Coordinate with the SUAR Marketing team on a timely completion of hard-copy brochures and other program promotion materials (digital signage, etc.)
- Coordinate with Venture Core staff to ensure trips get placed on Venture outlook calendar, Venture online calendar, UNC Charlotte Campus Events Calendar
- Coordinating general marketing efforts, including, but not limited to SOAR Resource Fairs (with Assistant Director, Programs), distributions of brochures to campus locations (including residence halls), Venture Facebook, and Venture Twitter, Venture Online Newsletters, and other venues.
- Coordinate any necessary initial logistics and reservations (including, but not limited to, campground reservations, campus room reservations, and vehicle reservations)
- Solicit, arrange, and confirm (using trip staff contracts) staffing teams for each trip. All staff teams must:
  o **Have at least 1 member who is certified as in Wilderness Advanced First Aid (WAFA)**
  o **Have at least 1 member who is certified as a van driver** (more may be necessary for a trip that is far away from Charlotte)
  o **Have at least two staff members** (occasional exceptions are made. Please see “Co-Leadership and Working with Others” section in Chapter 1)
  o **Have at least 1 staff member who has been signed off as a “Trip Leader” (both General Trip Leader and in the specific trip activity)**. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis for staff teams with strong complementary skills, such that all of the “Trip Leader Qualifications” are covered among the staff team.
Trip Registration
The Venture Office Manager oversees registration of participants on Venture trips, though all Venture Core staff and office assistants should be familiar with the process and may assist with registration as needed.

Eligibility:
Members of the UNC Charlotte community and greater Charlotte community are welcome on trips, given they are over 18 years of age, willing to sign a waiver, fully complete a medical history form, and are able to meet the physical requirements of participation. There are some guidelines regarding youth participation:

- **Any participant under 18 must have parental/guardian approval to participate.** A parent/guardian must sign the waiver and medical history form.
- Persons under 14 years of age may participate only in programs designed for family groups. The Assistant Director (Trips) or Director may refuse those under 18 if their participation is deemed inappropriate or a poor fit for the trip and/or group.

Registration Process (note this process reflects paper registration, and specific procedures may be altered if/when online/OrgSync registration is implemented):

- The registration card and medical history form should be completely filled out.
- **One medical history form needs to be filled out per year.** New medical forms should be placed in the “Unsigned Medicals” folder
- **A participant’s place on a trip is not confirmed until Venture receives payment.** Venture can accept cash and check in the office, or can direct participants to pay online (venture.uncc.edu) via a personal device.
- The last opportunity to register for a trip is at the pre-trip meeting (exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis)
- A waiting list should be created whenever a trip is full

Refund Policy:

- $10 of the trip fee is non-refundable and non-transferable
- 14+ days prior to the trip: The total fee, less $10, may be refunded or applied towards another trip in the same semester
- 7-13 days prior to the trip: No refund. The trip fee, less $10, may be applied to other trips within the same semester.
- 0-6 days prior to the trip: No refund. The trip fee, less $10, may be applied to other trips only if your spot can be filled.
- Occasionally, Venture must cancel a trip due to staff illness, environmental hazards, low enrollment, or unforeseen circumstances. In such an event, participants may either receive a full refund (including the $10) or may apply the fee to another trip.

Division of Responsibilities
This division of responsibilities is to serve as a guideline, and is not a substitute for good communication! A reminder email (or “Logistics Blast”) will also summarize tasks and division of responsibilities each week.

Assistant Director (Trips) & Logistical Staff:
Note that The Assistant Director (Trips) will not personally complete all of these tasks, but is ultimately responsible for ensuring their quality and timely completion by logistical staff.

- Coordinate weekly logistical and maintenance tasks
• Send pre-trip reminder email to participants & staff
• Pull, prepare, and check group gear (based on trip staff’s list)
• Buy & pack food (based on trip staff's menu)
• Ensure vehicles and trailers are in good, working condition, are adequately fueled and loaded (as necessary)
• Coordinate review & signing of Medical History Forms by physician
  o All participants must have fully completed a Medical History form.
  o Medical Forms should be reviewed and signed off on by a physician. Follow up on any concerns highlighted by the physician with the participant, and re-submit the form to the physician as necessary.
  o In the event of a late registration, when there is no opportunity for the Medical History Form to be reviewed by a physician, the Assistant Director (Trips) must use his/her best judgment in allowing the participant on the trip. Participants may be allowed on the trip if there are no concerns or red flags on the form. Concerns include, but are not limited to; out of shape, allergies, chest pain, untreated or severe asthma, family history of heart problems, recent or recurring injuries, any medical conditions not understood by the staff, and any medications. When there is any doubt, the participant must be turned away until the form can be reviewed by a physician.
• Obtain printed & electronic copies of Roster & Emergency Contact Roster (from Office Manager). Put printed copies in the trip folder.
• Coordinate Venture On-Call Emergency Coordinator (VOCEC) and communicate name and phone number to trip staff.
• Review and approve of Trip Report (submitted by Trip Leader). If unable to approve the report, communicate the necessary changes to the Trip Leader in a timely fashion
• Sign off on the Trip Report, coordinate Director to sign off on the Trip Report, and send signed “Field Trip Report” (a form provided by the University Risk Management office) to Risk Management. Retain a copy for our records. Print copies of Trip Report and place in trip folder.
• Email Trip Report & Emergency Contact Roster to UNC Charlotte Chief of Police, Watch Commander, VOCEC, Venture Core Staff and trip staff.
• Prepare and give On-Call Packet to VOCEC. The Packet should include:
  o Workshop Report
  o Emergency Contact Roster
  o Trip Staff Manual
  o Wilderness First Aid Pocket Handbook
  o Relevant Maps
  o Any other information deemed necessary to understand the trip and respond in an emergency

Trip Leader
Note that the Trip Leader may not personally complete all of these tasks. Utilizing other trip staff and delegating responsibility is recommended. The Trip Leader, however, is ultimately responsible for ensuring their quality and timely completion.
• Always CC the Assistant Director (Trips) on all trip-related emails
• Complete the Trip Report and send to the Assistant Director (Trips) for review (in electronic format). Generally, the Trip Report should be submitted for review prior to Wednesday at 5pm. Be ready to edit and/or elaborate as directed by the Assistant Director (Trips) and re-submit, if necessary, before 5pm on Thursday.
• Schedule, plan & lead the Staff Meeting (also known as the pre-pre-trip meeting). Refer to the section later in this chapter on the Staff Meeting for more details.
• Plan and lead the Pre-Trip Meeting. Refer to the section later in this chapter on the Pre-Trip Meeting for more details.
• Gather and review participant and staff medical history forms. Address any questions or concerns to the Assistant Director (Trips) and/or the participant, as appropriate as necessary. Be mindful of confidentiality and address questions in private.
• Ensure all participants read and sign a waiver and have a completed medical history form
• Menu planning (be sure to take in to account allergies and dietary restrictions). Refer to the section later in this chapter for details.
• Filling out group gear request form
• Signing out personal gear and ensuring all participants have adequate gear
• Pulling and bringing maps
• Loading van (with gear and food, etc.), pulling fuel from the cabinet, putting fuel on the roof
• Arranging for emergency funds—typically $50 per day. Obtain from the Office Manager. The trip staff is responsible for these funds and liable if they are missing or used improperly.
• Pre-Trip Meeting summary email
• Checking food and gear being sure everything is as it should be. The Assistant Director (trips) and logistical staff strive for perfection, but omissions do occur. The trip leader should check over the food and gear for essentials prior to departing.
• Alert VOCEC to any no-shows on the day of the trip

The Trip Report
When writing the trip report, trip staff must bear in mind that the trip report is an important document that may be used by multiple parties, including less experienced trip staff (i.e. apprentices), the VOCEC, and individuals involved in the Venture’s emergency communication procedures. Do not exclude information because “I know the area very well and won’t get lost” (for example). Always write the trip report with a level of detail such that an individual with no knowledge of the area would be able to easily follow the report. Some steps that will help in writing a quality report include:
• Review past trip reports from the area/activity (these are kept in a filing cabinet in the Assistant Director’s office). Post-trip reports may include important information about how to schedule and plan for the upcoming trip.
• The Assistant Director (trips) may be able to provide you with an electronic template from a previous similar trip. If using a previous template, please check to ensure the information (phone numbers, driving directions, etc.) is correct.
• Follow the Venture Workshop Report template closely (see appendix)
  • A “Time Control Plan” section, in addition to a basic itinerary, is required for any trip entering the “wilderness” (as defined by greater than 1 hour or 1 mile from definitive medical care)
• Note that the Trip Report is not finished until it is reviewed, signed, and approved by the Assistant Director (Trips) and by the Director. Accordingly, plan to turn the report (in electronic format) into the Assistant Director (Trips) prior to Wednesday at 5pm. This deadline allows time for review and editing, if needed.
  • If the Assistant Director (Trips) sends the Trip Report back noting necessary changes, the Trip Leader must make these changes promptly and re-submit.
The Staff Meeting

Venture strongly recommends running a staff meeting (also known as a pre-pre-trip meeting) prior to the general Pre-Trip Meeting. Occasionally due to extenuating circumstances, staff are unable to find a time to meet with each other. In such rare occasions, the following decisions/planning/discussions must be done via email, phone call, text etc.

The purpose of the staff meeting is to set the stage for a smooth Pre-Trip Meeting and a successful trip. The staff meeting will serve to get all leaders “on the same page,” both in terms of the “nuts and bolts” of the trip and also in terms of a good working relationship between/among leaders. Some practical questions to be asked and planning to be done include:

- Who is responsible for what? When should tasks be completed by?
- The trip route & itinerary
- Pre-trip meeting planning
  - Use the planning sheets provided by Venture to help ensure all necessary topics are covered (see appendix)
- Pulling & reviewing maps, medical history forms, and any other necessary reference materials
- Planning for how/when participants are going to check out gear

Beyond these questions, a successful trip is grounded in a solid staff team relationship. Use the staff meeting to discuss:

- Staff goals (both for participants/the trip and for him/herself). What is each staff member looking to gain from this experience?
- Expectations for each other.
- How do you plan to work together?
  - Utilize portions of the “Co-Leader Inventory” (included in the Appendix of the manual) to identify potential areas of strength or conflict as a team.
  - Refer to the “Co-Leadership and Working with Others” section (in the previous chapter) for more guidelines on Venture’s expectations for co- and tri-leadership
- Overall, what should your co-leader(s) know about working with you?

The Pre-Trip Meeting

The Pre-Trip Meeting is an important opportunity to set the tone for a trip. Attendance is important and not attending may disqualify a participant from attending a trip (use your best judgment). To boost attendance, the Pre-Trip Meeting time is posted in the Venture brochures, and the Assistant Director (Trips) will send 1-2 reminder emails the prior to the meeting. The Trip Staff may choose to send out additional notifications and information as they see fit.

Staff are encouraged to follow the “Generic Pre-Trip Meeting Outline” (see appendix) provided by Venture, to ensure all necessary topics are covered. Special emphasis and attention should be given to:

- Having participants review, sign, and understand the waiver
  - Have participants sign driver/passenger waivers, as needed
  - If necessary, have participants fill out a Medical History Form
- Beginning the meeting with a fun and engaging name game. Some suggestions include: Group Juggle, Name motion/dance game, Noodle Whack.
- Review the trip itinerary. Don’t just talk about it—get maps out and show where you will be going
  - Make clear expectations about arrival time. Venture will leave without you if you are late and do not communicate.
  - Make clear expectations regarding return times—we cannot guarantee we will be back by any specific time
- Make clear if there will be meals or other things participants are expected to purchase out of their own pocket (not covered in the trip fee)
- Provide at least 1 staff personal phone number

**Discuss goals for the trip, including goals and expectations for how to treat each other**
- Depending on the nature and intensity of the trip, create a Full Value Contract on the board or on a sheet of flipchart paper

**Plan the menu**
- Take into account dietary restrictions
- It is often a good idea to have some ideas ready to present, which the group can agree with, edit, or dismiss.
- Plan with Venture’s food guidelines (see next section) in mind

**Gear and Equipment**
- All loaner gear is included in the price of the trip
- Think of yourself as a “DEFENDER OF SAFETY.” You’re not being nitpicky! Rather you’re making sure everyone has adequate gear for their own safety.
  - Be sure participants understand if they refuse to bring or borrow adequate gear, they may not be able to attend. Follow a “you don’t have to use it, but you do have to bring it” philosophy
- Do NOT take for granted that participants will know what to bring!
- Explain we tend to “plan for the worst and hope for the best”—our gear may seem excessive, but we always plan to get caught out in bad weather!
- Have examples of appropriate clothes/gear (especially for overnight trips) ready for demonstration
  - You may also require participants to bring in their gear to the pre-trip meeting, so you can physically check it. This is a good idea for trips with more extreme weather (such as winter trips)
- Use the Equipment Lists as tools, but deviate and explain further when necessary. Do not just hand out or simply read the list without explanation!
- It is highly recommended you check out and distribute personal gear (clothes, sleeping bags, etc.) during the pre-trip meeting rather than on the morning the trip begins
  - The trip morning can hectic and it is easy to forget or omit items
  - Distributing gear at the pre-trip allows staff to identify any potential gear shortcomings and allows time to make a plan
  - Distributing gear at the pre-trip allows participants to practice packing and working with their gear before the trip
- You may use the check-out list to keep track of who borrows what gear. Venture does understand recording every item number can be a cumbersome process and allows trip staff to decide to what extent and level of detail to use the form. If you choose not to use the list, you (the trip staff) will ultimately be responsible for any gear that comes up missing after the trip.

**Review Venture’s expectations & relevant rules**
- Leave No Trace
- Teamwork and contribution (we’re not a guide service)
- Stay together
- We strive for safety—it is necessary to follow our rules while on a Venture trip
- Flexibility
- Free from drugs, alcohol, and tobacco
- Free from cell phones
We have found that setting up the expectation early that we will not have phone on the trip elicits a positive response. Be very sure to cover this in the pre-trip meeting

- Setting up the expectation late (i.e. the day of the trip) often meets with resistance
- Offer to store phones in a safe place (i.e. a locked office)
- Phones on Airplane Mode are okay for photos
- We cannot guarantee the security of phones locked in the van
- We will keep 1-2 staff phone with us and off in case of an emergency

Following the Pre-Trip Meeting, follow-up as necessary:
- Send a Pre-Trip Summary Email out to all participants
- Try to be in touch individually with no-shows to communicate important information and possibly arrange a time to check out gear
- Finish the Equipment Form and Menu Planning Form as necessary
- Check-in with the Assistant Director (Trips)

**Food**

Venture strives to create a balance in its menu planning. A balance between...

- Healthy and Appetizing
- Cheap and Costly
- Exciting/Exotic and having a Wide Appeal

In general, we strive for food to be appetizing, relatively healthy, affordable, and suitable to a wide range of dietary restrictions and preferences. It is very important that participants eat sufficient calories while on trips with Venture, and we aspire for our food to be appealing enough so that meeting caloric needs is easy. Meals should be kept basic, high calorie, and small in physical size (easy to transport). When in doubt, err on the side of plain, and allow participants to add spices and ingredients to their own dishes.

Menu planning is typically done during the Pre-Trip Meeting, with the input of all staff and participants. Be sure to take into account dietary restrictions, preferences, and especially allergies. **Be sure to note and find out any relevant details (in a private conversation) regarding food allergies. It is essential to know the severity of the allergy, as it will affect how we plan and pack food. All food allergies must be noted on the menu planning form** (see appendix). At times, especially for trips with many meals, it may be a good idea to present some meal ideas to the group, as starting from scratch can sometimes be a lengthy process. Also guide participants toward using the bulk foods Venture already has on hand (these foods are listed on the menu planning form).

Use the Venture menu planning forms, as these will help remind you of the bulk foods Venture tends to keep on hand and will help you remember many of the details that go along with food packing. If you’re not sure how to use or cook these foods, refer to the “Venture Bulk Dry Food Uses & Meals” and the “Venture Cooking Cheat Sheet” (see appendix). Copies of these reference tools are kept in the Venture office, the food prep area, and in the appendix of this manual. Be aware that if the requests made are similar to Venture bulk foods on hand, substitutions may be made to save on resources and money.

Finally, remember that the menu planning form is being used by another person! If you want something, write it down, no matter how “obvious” you think it is. Do not make assumptions about what another person will know to pack. Make an effort to keep the form legible and re-write the form if it is hard to read.

Some meal suggestions are...

**Breakfast:** Oatmeal, Grits, Bagels, Cream Cheese, Pancakes (with dry fruit, dry milk, and hot drinks)
Lunch: A “vehicle” (pita, tortilla, wasa crackers) with high-calorie toppings, such as: peanut butter & jelly, hummus, cheese, pepperoni, summer sausage, cream cheese, tuna
Dinner: See Bulk Dry Food Suggested Uses & Meals (appendix)
Snacks: GORP (pre-made and stored in bins, every participant packs his/her own), crackers, dry fruit, fresh fruit, veggies, cookies
Beverages: Instant lemonade, hot chocolate, hot cider, hot coffee, tea

Equipment
Please refer to the “Pre-Trip Meeting” section above for guidelines surrounding personal equipment checkout.

Fill out the Equipment Form at the earliest convenient and realistic time. The completed form can be left in the trip folder. Be sure to keep in mind gender ratios when requesting tents. Unless there are reasons to arrange otherwise, all tent groups should be of the same gender. As with food, be aware that this form will be used by another person. If you want something, write it down—do not make assumptions about what another person will know to pack. Make sure the form is legible and easy to understand. A fully-stocked First Aid Kit must be brought on all trips. Logistics staff will check the First Aid kit prior to the trip. All staff and participants must have whistles on their person at all times while on trips. All other gear to be brought is based on the trip and the staff’s judgment. It is expected that staff will “plan for the worst” rather than the best. For example, on a day hike, staff should consider bringing headlamps, a tarp (emergency shelter), stove, and a sleeping bag in case there is an injury and/or the group is delayed for unforeseen reasons.

The Assistant Director (Trips) and Logistics Staff will pull and prepare the gear requested on the form, including testing/checking stoves. Gear will be left on a table and will be ready to be loaded into the vehicle(s).

The trip staff is responsible for loading gear, including food, into the vehicle(s). Some commonly forgotten items include: the first aid kit, food, headlamps, and stove fuel. Fuel must be stored in the fuel cabinet when on campus, and must be transported in the fuelbox strapped to the top of the vehicle (or in a trailer) (not inside of a vehicle). Remember to get your fuel out of the cabinet as the logistics staff are unable to take the fuel out of the cabinet ahead of time.

Trip Procedures
Venture has many activity-specific policies and procedures for its trips. These policies and procedures are covered in Chapter 3. The policies and procedures in this chapter have less to do with outdoor activities, and more to do with the details and logistics of running a Venture trip.

Meeting at Venture
Unless otherwise designated, all trips meet at the Venture Office and all trip participants travel from Venture, to the trip site, and back to Venture in Venture’s vehicles(s). Anyone driving or riding in a personal vehicle to and/or from the trip site must fill out a driver or passenger waiver (see appendix), as appropriate. Some guidelines for a successful meeting and send off are:

• Staff should arrive approximately 30 minutes before participants.
• If not already done, check over the food and gear, and pack into the vehicle(s).
• Make a plan for checking in with participants who were not able to attend the pre-trip meeting.
• If not already done, check out personal gear to participants
• Have participants fill GORP bags for themselves and fill water bottles for themselves
• If using a trailer, check all the boats and tie-downs to ensure stability. Check trailer and light connection. Make sure to remove wheel chocks.
• Play some sort of name or get-to-know-you game prior to departure
• Review itinerary and plan for the day with participants
• Logistical staff will have fueled and checked the vehicles prior to the trip date. It is still a good idea to do a brief walk-around of the vehicle to check for any obvious problems with the vehicle.
  o If there is insufficient fuel in the vehicle, or fuel needs to be purchased during the trip, use the Voyager cards enclosed in the zippered pouches in the vehicles. These pouches contain the credit cards, along with a cardstock card with ID numbers. Get a receipt. Only buy as much gas as is needed, as gas is cheaper on campus. If, for any reason, gas needs to be purchased with personal funds, be sure to get a receipt.
• Conduct a review of essential personal equipment with participants. This may be done verbally or physically (looking at the gear), depending on time and the nature of the trip. Ensure all participants have all necessary personal gear (including activity specific gear and camping/overnight gear).
• Text/call VOCEC with any no-shows or any changes in itinerary
• Inform participants state law requires seatbelts to be worn in the vehicle at all times

Trip staff must bring the trip folder. The folder contains:
• Medical history forms for all staff and participants (these forms always stay with the group)
• Signed waivers
• Trip Reports (these always stay with the group)
• The Field Manual (coming soon. This always stays with the group)
• Relevant Maps
• Any necessary permits or reservation confirmations
• Workshop evaluation forms (for the end of the trip) and pens

Trip staff must bring the cell phone listed on the workshop report for trip staff phone number. This phone should be fully charged and OFF to conserve the battery and used only for emergencies or necessary communication with the VOCEC. Trip staff should take precaution to guard the phone against the environment. A recommendation is to put the phone in a zip-lock baggie inside of the First Aid Kit.

Returning to Venture
The fun doesn’t stop once the vehicle pulls back into Cone! Be sure to let participants know in advance that unloading, de-issue, and clean up is a group task, and they will not be able to leave immediately after the van pulls in. When arriving back on campus, text or call the VOCEC to let him/her know you are back. If you are running behind schedule, it is also courteous to call/text when you’re on the road with a revised ETA.

Find time for participants to fill out a Workshop Evaluation Form. The evaluation can be filled out in paper format or in the Ipads (coming soon!). It can be done back at Venture or on the road back to Venture. Either way, it should be done with enough time to gather quality feedback, and with relative privacy from the staff. Don’t hover while participants are filling out the evaluation. Allow them to place the form, face down, in the Assistant Director’s mailbox, and make a point to NOT read the evaluations in front of any of the participants.

If not already done, also allow for time and space to lead a final debriefing session.

Work together (staff and participants) to hang and put away gear as necessary, to put away food, to clean out the van, and straighten and organize as appropriate. Some guidelines include:
• Check-in borrowed personal gear. As with check-out, Venture understands this can be a lengthy process. Trip staff may use their best judgment as to the level of detail they will use in checking back in equipment, with the knowledge that they may be liable for anything missing or damaged if they are not otherwise able to account for it.

• Designate 2 bins: 1 for laundry and 1 for dishes
  o Laundry: Polypro tops & bottoms, fleece pants & jackets, stuff sacks, socks, hats, gloves, sleeping bag liners, utensil mesh bags
  o Dishes: Cup, bowl, spoon (remove from mesh bag and put mesh bag in laundry bin), pots/pans, cooking utensils, (empty) nalgene

• Hang up anything that is wet, typically rain jackets, throw ropes, PFDs, spray skirts, dry bags...

• Always hang up rain gear, tents, and sleeping bags to air out
  o Rain gear and sleeping bags are washed 1-2 times per semester as they degrade with frequent washing. Instead of washing after each use we air out these items and wipe down as necessary
  o Any trash or debris should be cleaned out of tents
  o Check pockets of rain gear for trash etc.
  o Place tent poles and other tent parts on tables

• Fully unpack backpacks and allow to air out

• Put ensolite pads away or allow to dry/air out as necessary

• Place stoves, water filters, trowel kit, First Aid Kit on tables. Put fuel back in fuel cabinet.

• Check van for trash and anything not claimed.

• Put any unclaimed items in the Lost and Found bin

• If necessary, take all items out of the cage section of the boat trailer and hang as appropriate. Boats may remain on the trailer unless otherwise discussed.

• Food should be taken to the food room and unpacked from stuff sacks
  o Remove tape labels from stuff sacks and place stuff sacks in laundry bin
  o Any non-perishable/reusable food items should be left on the food packing table or in the refrigerator/freezer, as appropriate
  o Anything inappropriate for re-use (i.e. mostly used blocks of cheese, half-eaten bags of carrots…) should be thrown away or may be taken by staff

• Return trip folder to filing cabinet

• Place unused money (and receipts, if appropriate) in the bottom locked drawer of the Office Manager’s desk

• Before leaving, ensure office, cage, and vehicles are locked

If there were any problems with gear, these problems should be communicated promptly to the Assistant Director (Trips). A note, email, call, or in-person conversation are all acceptable methods of communication.

It is helpful, but not necessary, to leave a note with information about what, if anything, was used from the First Aid Kit.

Any deviation from policy should be documented before leaving (it is acceptable to document in the week following the incident, but highly encouraged to document as soon as possible to retain all details) and must be communicated directly to the Assistant Director (Trips) and/or Director promptly (the next business day).

If there were any Accidents/Incidents/Near Misses, an Accident Form should be filled out before departing (it is acceptable to fill out the form in the week following the incident, but highly encouraged to complete the form as soon as possible to retain all details). See next section for guidelines on what situations require this paperwork. Accidents/Incidents/Near Misses must also
be communicated directly to the Assistant Director (Trips) and/or Director promptly (the next business day).

**Post Trip Procedures**
Cleaning and organizing of gear will largely be taken care of by the Assistant Director (Trips) and logistics staff.

**Trip staff should communicate any trip no-shows to the Assistant Director (Trips) on the business day following a trip.**

**Accidents & Incidents**
As noted above, the first and most pressing responsibility following a trip is to communicate and document any deviation from policy and/or any accidents/incidents/near misses from the trip. **Incidents must be verbally reported to the Assistant Director (Trips) and/or Director the business day immediately following the incident.** Necessary Accident/Incident documentation must be completed before the end of the week following the trip. **An Accident-Incident Report (and, as appropriate a Patient Assessment) must be filled out if:**

- The Venture Emergency Action procedures were invoked
- Outside (medical) help was needed to care for a participant
- A participant was evacuated for any reason
- The injury may get worse or have further complications
- The incident changes the course of the trip (length, route, etc.)
- There was potential for serious injury (a “near miss”)
- There is a lesson to be learned that may help avoid a future accident

It may be recommended in certain situations to follow-up with individuals involved in significant injuries or incidents. The Venture Director (or designee) should make follow-up calls in such a situation. Trip staff may also be asked to maintain an on-going dialogue with any participants who may need continuing support following a trip.

**The Post-Trip Meeting**
At Venture, we strive to reflect on and learn from our experiences! No trip would be complete without asking ourselves what we can take away from the experience. The Post-Trip Meeting provides a space to review and reflect on participant feedback, review and reflect on the trip and trip procedures, give feedback to each other as instructors, and provide suggestions for future trips. Staff are to be advised their responsibility is not complete until a Post-Trip Meeting has been completed. It is generally the responsibility of the Trip Leader to schedule the Post-Trip Meeting. Venture expects the meeting will be held as promptly as possible, preferable in the week directly following a trip. **At the Post-Trip Meeting...**

- Staff will review the Workshop Evaluation forms and discuss as necessary
- Staff will fill out the “Workshop Evaluation Summary” form
- Staff will fill out the Post-Trip Report form completely
  - The Post-Trip Reports from contains directions on what to do with paperwork (what to keep, where to file, etc.). Follow these instructions closely.
- Staff will give each other feedback
  - At a minimum, verbal feedback should be shared and some notes recorded on the Post-Trip Report
  - It is recommended staff fill out and share/discuss a Co-Instructor Evaluation form for each other
Staff are encouraged to engage the Assistant Director (Trips) and/or the Director should a conflict have emerged that the staff are unable to resolve on their own.
Chapter 3: Activity-Specific Policies & Procedures

For All Trips

Staff:Participant Ratios

The STANDARD ratios will be met or exceeded unless specific approval is granted by the Venture Director.

- Backpacking. Standard ratio of 1:7 with a minimum ratio of 1:10 when conditions warrant (mainly during academic class situations when students have adequate skills and experience)
- Orienteering. Standard ratio of 1:7. This ratio may be disregarded in the context of an officially recognized and organized Orienteering Meet.
- Sea kayaking, flatwater canoeing/kayaking. Standard ratio of 1:5.
- Whitewater Rafting. Contracted with professional raft-guiding companies. The standard ratio is 1:6 (1 guide in each boat).

Leave No Trace

Venture trips are expected to follow LNT principles at all times. For additional information, refer to www.lnt.org

The LNT principles are listed below, along with Venture-specific notes (as applicable)

- Plan Ahead and Prepare
  - The detailed Workshop Report is an essential piece of planning ahead
  - Venture limits group size to minimize impact. Our typical group is 11, with 10 being maximum in designated wilderness areas
- Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Dispose of Waste Properly
  - Pack out all trash, including food trash
  - Feminine hygiene products must be carried out, not buried
    - A basic backcountry period kit includes: tampons (preferable without applicator to reduce waste) / pads, zip lock baggie with baking soda or crushed aspirin (odor neutralizer), hand sanitizer, and tin foil, all in an opaque bag. Wrap used products in tin foil, then place in baggie with odor neutralizer. The whole kit should be hung at night with the bear bag.
  - Dig catholes (minimum of 6 inches deep) for the disposal of human waste
    - Toilet paper should be used sparingly or not at all. A few squares are okay to bury. Anything more needs to packed out. Participants and staff are encouraged to use smooth sticks, dead leaves, sticks, etc. as toilet paper (taking care not use poison plants)
  - Food scraps should be eaten or packed out. Pots/pans should be scraped clean and then washed using a small amount of biodegradable soap 200 feet away from a water source
  - Complete a “sweep” of camp before leaving to ensure no garbage is left behind
- Leave What you Find
  - Leave natural souvenirs behind
- Minimize Campfire Impacts
o Staff much check ahead of time to ensure fires are permitted in the area they are traveling/camping. If it has not been confirmed fires are permitted, assume fires are not permitted.
o Even if fires are permitted, consider the choice carefully. Avoid burning rhododendron. All fires should be kept small. Use established rings, if available. Burn all wood and coals to ash and put fire out completely before the last person goes to bed.

• Respect Wildlife
  o Do not touch, approach, feed, or pick up wild animals
  o Avoid walking on plant life in exposed areas
  o **Hang food and items that smell like food in a bear bag at night.** Use a pulley system to decrease stress on the tree limb. **When hoisting the bag, no one should be standing directly beneath the bag or tree limb.**

• Respect Other Visitors
  o Keep noise to a minimum
  o Step to the side of a trail to allow others to pass
  o Avoid spending the night in shelters. Many hikers depend on these shelters and it is rude to take up the shelter with a group. Always assume you will not use a shelter and set up tents. If it is late, the weather is inclement, and there is no one else present, a group may move into a shelter.
o Avoid pranks, both within a group and between groups. Pranks undermine trust and may lead to injuries.

**Road Crossing**
(taken from the Harvard FOP Leader Handbook)
Road crossing is much more dangerous than it may seem. It is important to take precautions and cross safely. Follow these procedures when crossing any type of regularly traveled road. The procedures may be modified for crossing lesser used/forest service roads.

• Do not linger by a road. Stop far away from it to give participants a safety briefing. Get the group across quickly and make adjustments while on the trail
• Make sure you have 200 feet of visibility in each direction. If you do not, you should have a leader act as a spotter to let the group know when it is okay to cross. This is especially important when crossing in a spot where there are curves in the road
• Line up single-file along the road, with a leader at each end of the group, and communicate when everyone should begin walking across the road at the same time. Cross quickly and in a group.
• If you have to walk along a road, talk in a single file line on the side of the road facing traffic and as far from the road as possible

**Stove Use**
The operation, use, and care of stoves will be demonstrated to participants and monitored by instructors.

  **Venture staff should be trained on the operation and troubleshooting of Whisperlite stoves** (as our staff competencies dictate). See chapter 4 for more detailed stove operation information.

Policies/Procedures:
• Pack fuel below food or on the outside of a pack, to avoid contamination if fuel leaks
• Clear out loose debris from stove area before lighting. Keep the stove level and stable when lighting and in use.
• Use a conservative amount of fuel in the spirit cut (Whisperlite stoves). A full spirit cup leads to a fireball!
• Be sure the stove is “off” before priming the stove (lighting the fuel in the spirit cup)
• **When lighting a stove, keep face, hair, clothing, etc., away from the top of the stove.** Synthetic clothing is highly flammable and will melt to your skin. Do NOT expose synthetic clothing to open flame.
• **Do NOT leave lit stoves unattended**
• Instruct people to walk around rather than through the cooking area when stoves are lit
• Wait for stoves to cool before taking apart
• Take pots/pans off of a stove if the stove needs to be pumped/pressurized
• Be sure to use the proper fuel:
  o Whisperlites use white gas, stored in red hottles
  o Trangias use alcohol, stored in silver/aluminum bottles
  o **Never use fuel to start a campfire**
• When alcohol stoves are first lit, the flame is not easily visible. Hold your hand high above the stove to check for heat

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**Camp Hygiene**

Venture staff should always take and teach steps to prevent the spread of illness and germs while on Venture trips. Areas of particular attention are food preparation, cooking clean-up, water, and personal cleanliness.

**Food Preparation:**

- Individuals should wash and/or sanitize their hands thoroughly prior to handling, preparing, or eating food
- Biodegradable soap and/or hand sanitizer will accompany each trip and be available to staff and participants
- Avoid reaching hands into communal food bags; use a scooper

**Cooking Clean-Up:**

- Individuals are typically responsible for cleaning their personal bowls and other items. Bowls etc. should be cleaned after each meal. Teach the “Zen Tea” system as a way to clean one’s own dishes. If a participant strongly objects to the system, offer to have him/her clean his/her eating gear along with the group pots/pans
  - On longer trips, it is recommended to sanitize personal eating gear 1-2 times daily in a pot of boiling water
- Group pots/pans/utensils should be cleaned after each meal. Scrap pots/pans thoroughly and put scrapings in trash (pack out), to avoid leaving food scraps. Use biodegradable soap and a scrubbie and/or leaves/sand to scrub clean. Clean away from a water source. Rinse thoroughly as soap is a laxative.
- Uneaten food must be bagged an carried out, per LNT principles
- Food and food-smelling items must be bearbagged at night. See “Trip Procedures” in previous chapter for more details

**Water**

- **All drinking water taken from streams must be treated.** Acceptable treatments are limited to chemical (iodine or bleach), filtering, or boiling.

**Personal Cleanliness**

- It is suggested to bring a toothbrush and toothpaste at a minimum. A bandana is recommended as a towel and/or handkerchief
- Deodorant is discouraged
• **It is required to clean one’s hands after using a cathole.** Using the biodegradable soap is the best option. Ask for a buddy to put a drop of soap in your hands and then put water over your hands. Sanitizer is in the trowel kit as well for immediate cleaning, but should not be used as a substitute for washing your hands.

• Change socks and underwear on longer trips

• Females may opt to use a “pee rag” to help prevent UTIs

• Treat blisters and cuts promptly to prevent infection. Check on these injuries regularly to ensure infection has not set in.

**Swimming**

Swimming can be a risky activity. Use caution when allowing a group to swim, and be conservative in judgment. Especially in summertime, groups will request to swim. It is the responsibility of the staff to make conservative swimming decisions based on Venture’s policies and procedures, and based on the potential hazards at hand, rather than passed on participant requests. Staff are advised to forewarn participants that even if other groups/individuals are swimming at the trip site, we still may not swim. Policies and procedures to guide decision-making include:

- **No diving is allowed at any time**
- Swimming is not recommended in cool weather, as it poses a hypothermia risk
- **No swimming when thunder is audible or lightning visible**
- **No night swimming**
- **Dipping in shallow (no deeper than waist level) calm (not ocean, not whitewater) water or quiet pool is okay if no hazards are apparent, as approved by trip staff.** Hazards to be aware of may be: changing conditions downstream, current, animals, sharp rocks, unseen hazards underwater. **No one is permitted in water above waist level without a lifeguard present.** Even while “dipping” staff may choose to required participants to wear a PFD.
- **If a certified lifeguard is present and “on duty” people may swim in areas that are relatively free of hazards**
  - The lifeguard has the final say as to whether they elect to be “on duty.” Venture staff who are certified as lifeguards may decline to be “on duty” if they are uncomfortable taking on the responsibility.

  - **Swimming rapids is allowable only when the following conditions are met:**
    - There is a pool below the rapid in which it is easy for participants to stop and get out
    - All participants are wearing PFDs
    - All participants are instructed in the proper way to swim a rapid (whitewater swimmer’s position)
    - A staff with a throw rope is set up below the rapid
    - The rapid would be boatable according to Venture’s policies (i.e. class 2+ or below, with the occasional 3)
    - As with all activities, be sure to emphasize “challenge by choice” when offering the opportunity to swim rapids

- **Ocean swimming or playing in the surf will be at the discretion of the trip leader after she/he evaluates environmental, water, and participant conditions.** When conditions are deemed appropriate, the following procedures are recommended:
  - Everyone has a buddy
  - Do not go over waist deep in surf
  - Wear PFDs
Someone (preferable a lifeguard) may monitor swimmers from shore. This person should have and know how to use a throw rope.

At a public beach with a lifeguard on duty, swimming may be allows as indicated by the beach and lifeguard (without a PFD).

Activity Policies & Procedures
In the following sections, specific policies and procedures for each of Venture’s outdoor activities are detailed. Instead of simply listing policies and procedures, the following format is followed:

- **Purpose:** (Some reasons) why Venture chooses to engage in this activity
- **Staff Responsibilities:** What staff may need to do and/or be aware of specific to this activity
- **Risk Management Concerns:** Hazards specific to this activity to be aware of
- **Teaching Outline:** Topics and information to be covered by staff during this activity

Policies & Procedures may be included in any/all of these sub-sections

**Backpacking & Camping**

**Purpose:**

- To introduce a simplified, but unfamiliar, and sometimes imposing environment, in which participants have to face and solve realistic problems
- To provide opportunities for participants to exercise leadership
- To challenge participants physically and emotionally
- To instill in participants an appreciation for and sense of stewardship for the environment

**Staff Responsibilities:**

- At least one staff member should be familiar with the type of terrain to be traveled through. It is acceptable for no staff members to have been to the specific trip site, as long as the type of terrain is familiar and there are adequate and detailed maps
- Help with fitting of packs
- Ensure relevant policies/procedures are being followed at all times

**Risk Management Concerns**

- **River/stream crossings.** Rivers/streams with more than a sluggish current and more than knee-deep water will not be crossed without specific permission in advance by the Venture Director or Assistant Director (Trips). See section later in this chapter for more details.

- **When selecting a campsite,** staff must teach participants about the dangers of “widow makers” and survey the site with the group to identify possible problem trees. Staff should personally survey all campsites for possible widow makers, potential problems with lightning in the area, steep terrain, and security issues within the area.

- Private lands: Do not cross private lands without asking and obtaining permission from the landowner or managing agency

- **Groups should not split up.** In the event a group needs to split up (i.e. to send messengers in the case of an emergency), observe the following precautions:
  - Only one sub-group travels at once. The other remains in the same place.
  - Split the First Aid Kit up appropriately between the two groups
  - Split Medical History Forms appropriately
  - Each group should have a minimum of 2 people, with a strong preference for a minimum of 3.

- Generally a group will travel as the rate of the slowest person so the group can stay together. Having the slower participants up front will help set an appropriate pace (and often helps to
energize and motivate struggling participants). Find a pace that works for the group, and focus on settling into this pace, rather than starting and stopping.

- See separate section on lightning for lightning protocols
- No cooking in tents
- Stove use is to be done by or supervised by Venture staff

Teaching Outline. Instruction may take place on the following topics:

- Menu planning & food preparation
- Use & care of equipment
- LNT
- Personal dress & layering system
- Use of maps & compass
- Hiking techniques: lead & sweep, rest step, energy conservation, personal climate control, spacing, self-care
- Specific first aid issues (i.e. blisters, hypothermia)
- Hydration. Stress the importance of staying hydrated and drinking only treated water

Winter Camping & Travel

Purpose

- Refer to Backpacking & Camping Section above
- To introduce and imposing environment in which participants will have to manage physical discomfort and the need to keep warm
- To challenge participants physically and emotionally in a more demanding environment than encountered in warmer conditions

Staff Responsibilities

- Teach participants about hypothermia and frostbite proactively
- Be prepared for a blizzard. Holing up in tents and waiting out the weather may be necessary

Risk Management Concerns

- Refer to Backpacking & Camping Section above.
- Teach the signs & symptoms of hypothermia and frostbite, and have participants do checks on each other. Physically inspect fingers and toes for frostbite.
- Increase caloric intake. A very limited amount of food may be kept in tents overnight to fuel metabolism.

Teaching Outline. Instruction may take place on the following topics (in addition to Backpacking & Camping topics):

- The need for increasing caloric intake and proper hydration
- Caring for equipment—not losing gear in the snow, drying out gloves & socks in sleeping bag, storing boots overnight in such a way that they will not freeze
- How to stay warm overnight
- Layering

River & Stream Crossings

(Purpose section is omitted as river/stream crossings may be a necessary component of hiking/backpacking)

Staff Responsibilities

- Participants are not allowed to cross a river/stream without instructor supervision
• River/stream crossing that are more than knee deep and with more than a sluggish current will not be made without specific permission in advance from the Venture Director or the Assistant Director (Trips)

Safety Concerns
• Choosing a site to cross
  o Pick a wide, shallow stretch of water, free from obstructions. The banks should not be steep
  o Look downstream. If there are strainers, choose another point to cross.
  o Rock hopping or crossing on a log may be dangerous. What if someone falls? It is preferable to walk directly in shallow water rather than rock hopping or walking on a log.
• Methods for crossing without a rope
  o Crossing alone may be done in shallow/calm water
  o Form a triangle with 3 people, pointed upstream, with the strongest/most stable person in front
  o Have 3 or more people line up behind another, facing upstream, with the strongest/most stable person in front
  o Use a stout stick as a third leg and to probe depth
• Using rope
  o Use only as a hand line. **Do not clip in or wrap around hands or self.**
  o **Cross on the downstream side of the rope**
  o To make the initial crossing, select strong/stable individuals and use the techniques above
  o Anchor the rope 5-6 feet above the stream
  o The last person crosses using the same techniques as the first
• In all crossings
  o **Un-do waistband and sternum strap and loosen shoulder straps as necessary so that a pack can be removed easily if necessary**
  o **Face upstream**
  o Weigh the pros and cons of switching to camp shoes (wet camp shoes v. wet boots). Consider removing socks and/or insoles to minimize water in boots.
  o Lend a hand on each shore
  o Consider placing a staff member downstream with a throw rope if deemed necessary
  o Consider the water temperature and risk of hypothermia in making plans

Map & Compass, Orienteering
Purpose
• To teach the basic techniques of land navigation
• To teach a skill that is required for the successful completion of subsequent course activities and is transferable outside of the course
• To provide an opportunity for participants to make decisions of consequence
• To provide an opportunity for group interaction

Staff Responsibilities
• **For orienteering events, staff should record the time each person starts and ensure each individual checks back in following the event. If someone does not check back in, it is the staff’s responsibility to determine if the individual is still in the field and, if so, initiate a search.**
At least one staff member should have reconnoitered the area and be familiar with the terrain

Risk Management Concerns

- **When orienteering in small groups independent of an instructor, each group will carry a whistle and a watch and if appropriate will have a safety bearing.** It is recommended for all groups to have a cell phone in the “on” position, with the instructor’s cell phone number, and for the instructor to have these phone numbers.
- **Minimum group size for orienteering in wilderness areas is 3**

Inform participants of rendezvous times and what to do if behind schedule, if lost, if confronted by unexpected terrain or unexpected weather, or if injured.

Participants with experience in orienteering may go solo at UNC Charlotte, at sites with 5-color orienteering map (i.e. Reedy Creek), and meets run by the Carolina Orienteering Klubb or other clubs belonging to the US Orienteering Federation.

Teaching Outline. Please refer to supplementary texts for instructions and guidance on how to teach these topics, if unsure. *Allen & Mike’s Really Cool Backpackin’ Book* and *The Backpacker’s Field Manual* are available in the Venture Office and are good resources. Venture endorses the information in these texts). The topics are listed, but not explained in detail here, to safe space.

- **Instructor Considerations**
  - Introduce the map separately from the compass
  - Stress practice and observation
- **Maps**
  - What is a topographic map? Compare/contrast to other types of maps
  - Map care: folding, protection from the elements
  - Map features: Margin reference, colors, symbols, contour lines, scale, land features
  - Approximating travel time: 2 miles per hour, plus 1 hour for every 1000 feet up and 30 minutes for every 1000 feet down
- **Compass**
  - Baseplate, direction of travel arrow, compass housing, magnetic needle
  - Taking a bearing
  - Plotting a bearing
- **Orienting a map**
- **Taking a bearing from an oriented map, taking declination into account**
- **Taking a bearing from an orienteering map**
- **Taking a bearing from a non-orienteering map, taking declination into account**
- **Following a bearing**
- **Triangulation**
- **Orienteering strategies and terms**
  - Continual awareness of surroundings
  - Oriented map
  - “Thumbing” to keep track of location
  - Using handrails, catching features, check points, and attack points
  - Consider when to use rough v. standard v. precision orienteering
- **What to do if injured or lost**
  - Stay calm
  - Use whistle to attract attention
  - Try to follow a safety bearing (if you have one), or determine which direction will take you to obvious crossing features that can be followed to familiar territory
**Rock Climbing**

This section will address general issues with rock climbing, including purpose, general responsibilities, general safety concerns, rock climbing technique, equipment care, knots, and rope management. All rock climbing staff (Apprentice, Instructor, Trip Leader) must be familiar with this section. Subsequent segments will address anchors, rappelling, and multi-pitch climbs and are geared toward rock climbing Instructors and Trip Leaders.

**Purpose**

- “To demonstrate in the most stunning way of all that there is no limit to the effort [one] can demand of [oneself]” –Walter Bonatti
- To promote trust and responsibility in self and belayer

**Staff Responsibilities**

- **At least one staff member must know the climbing area and be familiar with the typical and alternative routes and anchors at the site**
- **At the site, always know the whereabouts of participants and the First Aid Kit, and what the weather is doing. Be alert to changing conditions.**
- Staff are encouraged to carry the following when monitoring a climbing site: extra carabiners, prussick cord, sling, and extra belay device
- **Select climbs that are appropriate for the skill level of participants**
- **Staff should inspect all climbing gear at the beginning of each climbing day**
- **Personally owned climbing gear (harness, belay device, shoes) is acceptable only after it has been inspected by Venture staff. Personally owned anchor gear is allowed only after obtaining permission from Venture Director, Assistant Director (Trips), or Assistant Director (Programs).**

**Risk Management Concerns**

- **All climbers, rappellers, and persons standing at the base of the cliff must wear helmets. Also, helmets must be worn anytime there is danger of rock fall.** Ensure proper helmet fit and secure chinstraps. Staff should model wearing helmets.
- **Harnesses: Ensure harnesses are double-backed. If using a harness with a belay loop connecting the waist and leg loops, the climbing rope must pass through both the loops (not the belay loop). Use the belay loop only for belaying.**
- **Equipment check: Harnesses, knots, belay device, anchor, and helmets must be checked before participants start to climb.** Ideally an instructor at the bottom of a climb performs these checks, as well as the climber and belayer checking each other.
- **Rope Inspection: Inspect all ropes directly prior to the trip (either at the trip site or in the days leading up to the trip. Ropes should not be used between check and the trip). Upon return, log hours of use and any substantial abuse the ropes may have sustained.**
- **The edge: No one, including staff, may be closer that his or her height to the edge of a cliff without being tied-in.**
  - Acceptable personal protection systems include: slings, prussicks (with catastrophe knot), gri gri, leap-frogging. All of these systems must be connected back to an acceptable anchor (see following section)
- **Rock fall: Inform participants about what to do if they see a rock dislodged and falling. Yell “Rock.” Likewise, inform participants about what to do if they hear “rock” yelled from above. Hug wall, don’t look up.**
- **Do no allow bouldering below a roped climber**
- Equipment: Sign out all equipment needed. Carry at least one extra rope for use in an emergency rappel and/or back-up belay
- Check routes: Look for loose rocks, nesting animals, etc. Clean route if necessary.
- Staff and participants should remove objects from body and clothing that could lead to injury (jewelry, etc.). Tie back long hair.
Basic Teaching Outlines

An introduction to basic rock climbing will require a full day. Plan on an early departure from the university. A ground school should be completed prior to the trip (at the pre-trip meeting). During ground school, the following should be covered (along with the information covered in a general pre-trip meeting. See previous chapter):

- Introductions & name game
- Waivers
- Removing objects from pockets, removing jewelry, appropriate attire
- Equipment overview
- Harnesses, helmets (parts, putting on, checking)
- Knot tying (figure 8 follow through)
- Belay demonstration, instruction, and practice
- Basic climbing techniques
- If appropriate, bouldering and spotting techniques
- If appropriate, rappelling

Care and Use of Climbing Equipment

- Helms: Reinforce proper fit and the necessity for a strong helmet.
- Harnesses: Explain proper fit and the necessity of checking for wear and tear on harnesses. Also stress proper way to fasten and double-back buckle.
- Carabiners: Explain the differences between steel and alloy, "D", pear-shaped and oval, and locking and non-locking, as well as the appropriate usage of each. Demonstrate a "squeeze check". **Any hardware that is dropped more than 15 feet onto a hard surface should be inspected immediately and given to Core Staff for review.**
- Nylon Webbing: Explain that we use 1" tubular nylon with a strength rating of 4,000 lb. for slings. These are tied off with double fisherman's knot, water knot or overhand on a bight. The Core Staff should inspect any webbing that is severely abraded or that has been in use for five seasons or more. *(University of New Hampshire: Top Rope Rock Climbing Policies).*
- Tech Cord Webbing: Explain that we use 5mm cord with a strength rating of 5,000 lb. for anchors. These are tied off with double fisherman's knot. The Assistant Director of Climbing should inspect any cording that is severely abraded or that has been in use for five seasons or more.
- Climbing Ropes: Point out their construction, strength (over 5,000 lb.) and elasticity. The ropes Venture uses are kernmantle in construction. Explain the necessity of inspecting ropes daily and the reason behind our policy of never stepping on ropes. Immediate retirement of ropes should be considered if they are subjected to severe stresses such as excessive abrasion or extreme forces. Report incidents of rope stress to the Assistant Director (Programs).
- Gloves: A glove may be worn on the "brake" hand when belaying or rappelling.
- Footwear: Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of tennis shoes, boots and climbing shoes.
- Belay Devices: Describe how these devices use friction to control or stop the rope. Staff may choose to talk about the history of belaying and the progression of belay devices. Demonstrate proper loading, use and care. Venture rock climbing trips primarily use ATC's. When using these devices, the brake hand can hold up to 2 kN (roughly around 2,000 pounds).

Knots

Familiarize participants with the standard knots used in our climbing program. Explain that any knot weakens the actual breaking strength of a rope or piece of webbing, as does bending the rope sharply,
and running the rope should a carabiner. All knots should have at approximately 6 inch tails.

- Figure 8 Follow-Through: Used to tie rope into harness. Backed-up with a Double Fisherman’s Knot. **Participants and staff will always tie in using this system. Exceptions may be made to clip in, but must first be approved by the Core Staff.**
- Figure 8 on a Bight: Used for anchors
- Prussick: Used for self-rescue, ascending ropes, and belay escapes
- Double Fisherman’s: Used to attach two ropes together (to make a prussick loop) and to back up other knots

**Rope Management**

- **All participants must be taught the reasons why no one may step on the rope (microscopic cuts)**
- Throwing rope: When someone is throwing a rope from the top of the rock, he/she must be tied into an anchor, call “Rope” and wait for the “Clear” response before throwing rope
- Coiling rope: Demonstrate and give participants the opportunity to learn how to coil a rope properly (butterfly coil). Also explain rope management and stacking.
- At the belay station, it is recommended a tarp be spread under the rope to protect from dirt.

**Bouldering**

Bouldering is used as a possible warm-up before climbing a roped climb or to practice more technique. It may also be a stand-alone trip. Be aware that while the perceived risks of bouldering are much lower than climbing, the actual risks may be greater, depending on circumstances and management of the activity.

- **Spotting:** It is important to control or contact the middle of the back of the person you are spotting so that part of their body absorbs the force. **Demonstrate spotting technique and have all participants practice with each other.**
  - Legs spread side to side and one forward of the other.
  - Torso facing the rock/wall with arms up, elbows bent and thumbs in.
  - 100% focus on protecting the climber’s head, neck and back
  - All bouldering must be spotted. Typically, 2 spotters per climber.
- **Bouldering Height:** **Do not allow bouldering above the spotter's shoulders unless rock is low angle.**
- If the site is appropriate, utilize traverse problems to de-emphasize the "get to the top at all costs" syndrome.

**Belaying**

Note that not even a flawless belay will prevent a climber who is very close to the ground from hitting the ground. Accordingly, using spotters for the first 5 or so feet of rock climbs is suggested to avoid hitting the ground due to rope stretch. See Bouldering section above for spotting techniques.

Note that this section assumes a bottom-managed “sling-shot” style belay. Some guidelines may not apply to top-managed sites.

A limited number of belay methods are acceptable on Venture trips. **Regardless of the method, the brake hand must never leave the rope and the brake hand must be in brake position when the climber is not moving.** The highly preferred methods of belaying is:

- P-BUS (pull, brake, under, slide)
These are the only methods of belaying that will be taught to participants. In some cases, a participant may have previous belay experience using a different method. In such cases, staff must use their best judgment as to whether the individual may continue to use their preferred method or must switch and learn P-BUS. Some guidelines for judgment:

- **If the method involves releasing the brake hand at any time, it is an unacceptable method**
- If the participant is equally comfortable with P-BUS and another method, or if the person is relatively new to belaying, he/she should use or learn P-BUS
- If the participant has been using an alternative, common method for an extended period of time, it is generally better to let the person continue to use this method. Trusting muscle memory may manage risk better than trying to teach a new habit. Yet, if there are sufficient other belayers, staff may choose to have the person altogether not belay.
  - The most common alternative method which may be observed is “Slip Slap Slide” (also known as the Pinch method).

The climber is tied into the other end of the rope using a figure-8 follow through knot. The rope must pass through the two designated points of the harness.

Participants should be taught belaying and may be to belay as part of a climbing trip. Staff must use their best judgment in allowing participant belays. The following are Venture’s policies and procedures for teaching belaying. Teaching belaying should be done during the pre-trip meeting (at the wall) and reviewed as necessary at the climbing site. **While practicing at the wall, all wall policies and procedures apply.** Refer to the Climbing Wall Manual for details.

- First, demonstrate the entire belay sequence, including commands and rope handling
- **Before belaying a “live” person (i.e. actually climbing), participants will do a “mock belay,” with the “climber” walking on the ground towards the belayer. This mock belay allows for practice and observation of how the belayer takes up slack from the rope.**
  - This practice will include at least 3 “falls” which the belayer must effectively “catch” before moving on
- Each participant will practice the belay sequence and verbal signals before that person is allowed to belay on site
- An instructor should watch the belayer’s brake hand (during the initial practice session), to ensure he/she never releases the rope with this hand
- During the first belayed real climb, the climber should take one practice fall at or within the first 20 feet of the start of the climb.
- Belayers should be taught to and empowered to tell climbers to slow down if necessary, so as to avoid having excessive slack in the rope

**Every participant doing a belay must also have a back-up belayer (using a hip belay).** On trips with more experienced climbers, staff and students may be checked out to belay without a second, at the discretion of Venture core staff.

- The back-up belayer will use a hip belay
- The back-up belayer will stand on the same side as the belayer’s brake hand
- The back-up belayer will allow enough slack to not interfere with the belayer, but not so much as to allow a major fall
- The back-up belayer may also manage the rope

When participants are belaying, Venture staff must remain actively involved and observe the process closely. Specifically:
• A qualified Venture staff member must check each belay system each time the belayer and/or climber changes, including the belay device, knot, and system.
• Venture staff must review belaying and back-up belaying with the individuals involved
• Monitor belaying and back-up belaying closely

Climbing Commands
Communication is fundamental to well-managed climbing. The following are specific commands to be used on Venture climbing trips. They should be called out clearly and loudly. When possible, use the names of belayers/climbers to avoid an confusion.

- “Rope”—called by the person setting the anchor before throwing the rope
  - “Clear”—Response from staff at the bottom to indicate the scene is clear and the rope may be thrown
- “Up Rope”—called by the climber after he/she is tied in
- “That’s me”—called by the climber after the belayer takes up slack
- “On belay?”—asked by the climber prior to climbing
  - “Belay on”—response from belayer after system, belay device, harnesses, and knots have been re-checked.
- “Climbing?”—asked by the climber when ready to start climbing
  - “Climb on”—response from the belayer when ready
- “Slack”—requested by climber if needed. Belayer gives out 1 arms length per request
- “Up Rope”—called by the climber if there is too much slack in the system
- “Tension”—requested by the climber, if needed. Belayer takes in rope until it is taught.
- “Falling”—called by climber if he/she falls. Helpful for the belayer, but not mandatory.
- “Got me?”—Called by climber when ready to come down. Belayer takes up extra tension and is in brake position and ready to lower
- “Off belay?”—Called by climber once he/she is on the ground and secure
  - “Belay off”—response from belayer
- “Rock”—used by anyone, as appropriate, when objects (rock and non-rock) fall

Bottom Anchors
(Much of the information in this section comes from the UNH Top Rope Climbing Class coursepack)
The belayer should have a bottom anchor. This anchor may be an object (tree or boulder) or the back-up belayer may serve as an anchor. The bottom anchor serves 2 purposes: anchors the belayer and enables a belay escape should one become necessary.

Bottom anchors should:
- Always have a master point made with a figure 8 on a bight, overhand on a bight, or monster knot at the end
- Be clipped to the belay loop below the belay device on the brake hand side
- Be tight on the belayer and inline with expected forces. Minimal slack.
- Keep the belayer on the ground
- Ensure the belayer can maintain a proper belay
- When using a person as an anchor, use a daisy chain or other appropriate cordage from belay look to belay loop

When using an object, the following anchors are acceptable (Images available in the appendix):
- Tied Webbing Loop (webbing)
Anchor Systems
(Much of the information in this section comes from the UNH Top Rope Climbing Class coursepack)

There are many ways to build appropriate top-rope rock climbing anchors in an institutional setting. This manual will focus on building anchors using bolts, as bolts are readily available in our most frequently used climbing sites, and as it is not permitted to use trees as anchors in North Carolina State Parks.

Anchor Requirements:

- **There must be two independent anchor objects for each anchor**
  - An independent anchor object is defined as: a well-rooted tree, a secure boulder or rock outcropping, a fixed bolt, or two or more artificial protection pieces (*only applies to staff who have been trained in using artificial protection*).

- **Anchors Should be EARNEST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equalized</td>
<td>Equal weight distribution on the two independent objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angle less than 90 degrees at master point</td>
<td>(as the angle increases, the load on each anchor increases)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redundant</td>
<td>(if one part of the system fails, the system automatically becomes available to maintain the integrity of the anchor system)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Extending</td>
<td>(if one element of the anchor system should fail, the anchor system does not greatly extend and shock load the system)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid</td>
<td>(solid anchor points and solid climbing gear are used. Boulders should pass the “hug test.” Trees should be alive, well-rooted, and at least 6 inches in diameter. Bolts should not spin and have no looseness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timely</td>
<td>(Setting up the anchor in a timely fashion leaves more time for climbing, and instills confidence in your skills)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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- Venture’s standard bolted anchor system is as follows (see image in the Appendix). **This system (or the alternative systems below) should almost always be used when building bolted anchors.** Staff must have well thought out reasons for deviating from this system. Of course, when using natural or artificial protection, the system will vary, but must still be EARNEST:
  - Static rope attached to one bolt with a figure 8 on a bight and locking carabiner
  - Master point over the edge of the cliff (see details on master point below)
    - Appropriate master points include: two figure 8s on a bight (with carabiners through both knots) or a monster knot
  - Static rope attached to the other bolt with a figure 8 on a bight OR with a clove hitch (for...
easy adjustment), backed up with a figure 8 on a bight (with locking carabiners)
  o The static rope padded as necessary with carpet where it goes over the edge
  o **Two opposite and opposed locking carabiners used at the master point**
  
  - Common alternative and acceptable systems include:
    - Using webbing instead of static rope. When using webbing, use overhand knots instead of figure 8s on a bight
    - When the bolts are directly on the cliff face (as opposed to the flat part above a cliff, such that the climbing rope coming off of an anchor will not go over/rub on the cliff edge), a “Quad” may be used (the picture in the appendix is much more clear than this explanation!):
      - A “Quad” is a large prussick loop (made from cordelette and made a prussick loops with 2 double fishermen knots)
      - The loop is “quaded”—twisted/folded such that it becomes a circle with 4 strands
      - Overhand knots are tied a few inches from each end. The fishermen knots should be in one of these “tails”
      - Clip all 4 loops of either end of the Quad to a different bolted anchor using a locking carabiner
      - Create a master point by clipping two opposite/opposed locking carabiners through three strands in the middle of the Quad (only use three strands to maintain the redundancy of the system)
  o When using trees, boulders, rock outcroppings, etc. staff must use their judgment to construct a **Earnest anchor**, depending on the specific situation and the materials available to them. Some good anchor systems to consider are (pictures included in the appendix):
    - **Tensionless hitch anchor system**
      - Can be constructed with static rope or with webbing
      - At any point on the tree/boulder, should see at least 3 wraps
      - Can be backed up with a retraced figure 8 (static rope) or overhand (webbing) or with a clipped figure 8 on a bight (static rope) or overhand on a bight (webbing)
      - Keep hitches low on the tree/boulder
      - This system can be made easier to construct by replacing one tensionless hitch with a cordelette anchor (such as doubled up or tree wrap), and then clipping static rope/webbing into the anchor with a clove hitch, then backed up with a figure 8/overhand. This adjustment allows for easier adjustment and of the master point, to aid in equalization.
    - **Horseshoe Hitch (webbing only)**
      - Individual instruction is necessary to build anchors with artificial protection. See the Assistant Director (Programs) to pursue this option
      - Build anchors in-line with the climbing route and with the belayer’s anchor
      - Test all objects used for anchors. Shake, tap, kick, etc. anchor points.
      - **Always double check all aspects of an anchor**. If two staff are qualified to build anchors, have one staff build and then another staff check.
      - If staffing allows, send some staff ahead to set anchors, so they are ready when the group arrives.

**Lead and Multi-Pitch Climbing**

- **No Venture participants will do lead climbing.** Staff may demonstrate a lead climb only with advanced permission from the Assistant Director (Programs) or Director.
- Student may participate in “mock leading” (still on top rope belay) when the program curriculum pre-requisites have been met and with prior approval of the Assistant Director
• Participants may follow on multi-pitch climbs with advanced permission from the Assistant Director (Programs) or Director, when the program curriculum involves multi-pitch climbing.
• When multi-pitch climbing, all students on the rope are to be brought to the same stance (i.e. belay station, ledge) before the leader climbs on. Only climbs that permit this practice will be attempted.
• Rope teams should generally consist of no more than 3 climbers.

**Rappelling**

Be aware that rappelling in an institutional setting is different than in a personal setting. Adjust practices accordingly.

- All participants must be on belay when rappelling. Belays will be done from the top (as detailed below), unless a specific exception is given by the Assistant Director (Trip or Programs).
- Be sure that participants tuck shirts, sweaters, and jackets well into their pants, that jewelry is taken off or is out of the way, and that hair is pulled back. Warn them that fingers, helmet chinstraps, and beards may also become caught in the belay device.

The following is taken from the University of New Hampshire Top Rope Climbing Manual, 2010. It describes an acceptable institutional rappelling system. **This system must be used unless permission has been otherwise granted by Venture Director or Assistant Director (Trips or Programs).** Staff must also be aware that this system, while effective at managing risk at rappelling sites, can be complicated and confusing to set up. Proper and timely set-up requires regular practice. If you plan on rappelling on a trip, be sure to practice this system regularly. **Reading this explanation is not a substitute for practice. Any staff leading rappelling must have hands-on experience and practice.**

- Site Selection is key
  - Smooth, sheer, vertical rock faces (no ledges) with good sight lines, flat tops, good anchors, and easy transitions from horizontal to vertical are best. If a site does not pass the “BEEF-V” guide, rappelling may not be the best choice.
  - Use the BEEF-V acronym as a guide:
    - Big anchor
    - Easy to see (cliff top and rappel line to ground)
    - Easy transition from horizontal to vertical
    - Flat, wide cliff top
    - Vertical face with no ledges
- Required Materials:
  - Two ropes of the same length. **Both ends of both ropes must be able to touch the ground from the anchor.**
  - **EARNEST anchors,** typically a high point, 6+ feet away from the edge, if possible
  - **Two pear-shaped carabiners** (for munter mules)
  - **4 other locking carabiners (minimum)**
- Steps (see images in appendix)
  - Create Anchor #1 (for Belay Line). If one anchor needs to be higher than the other, this one will be on top.
  - Fix one end of Belay Rope to the anchor with a figure 8 on a bight and locking carabiner. The belay rope will serve two purposes:
    - Belay line for the rappeller. The rappeller will tie into the other end of the rope, and will be belayed using a remote/extended munter hitch belay (from the same
Anchor #1. This system allows the staff/belayer to belay and view the participant as she/he descends.

- Personal protection for the belayer. Prussick youself onto the line (close to the anchor) so that you may stand close to the edge and view the rappeller as she/he descends

- Create Anchor #2 (for Rappel Line). If one anchor needs to be higher than the other, this one will be on the bottom

- Find the middle of the Rappel Line and Munter Mule it to Anchor #2
  - Stack one half of this rope near the anchor. It may be used in some rescues. Knot this end and clip back to the anchor, to close the system
  - Knot the other end (the end that will be thrown)

- Throw the Rappel Line and check its path, ensuring at least 6 feet of slack on the ground

- Set up the Munter Hitch belay

- Rappeller ties into the belay line with a retraced figure 8

- Rappeller sets up a single strand rappel (using a tubular belay device) on the rappel line

- Belayer prepared to perform commands and safety checks before walking towards the edge with the rappeller and then assumes a final position on the edge (remember, using a prussick for personal protection)

- Some advice to give to rappeller:
  - L position
  - Keep your feet flat and heels on the rock
  - Keep your feet wider than your shoulders
  - No bouncing or jumping—walk

- Follow commands:
  - On Belay (check all aspects of the system) / Belay On
  - Rappelling / Rappel Away
  - Off belay / Belay Off
  - Off Rappel and All Clear (when completely free of the system) / Thank you

- (Rescues are covered in a separate section)

**Top-Belayed Climbs**

As with rappelling, engaging in climbing at a top-managed site should be done only when planned in advance and permission has been gained from the Assistant Director (Programs) or the Director. Top-managed site may be more difficult to set up, more difficult to manage, and (if there is not walk-around route back to the top) may involve much more complicated rescues (as a participant cannot simply be lowered to the ground if his/her ability is exceeded).

Essentially, one-half of the above system—the Belay Line—for institutional rappels will be constructed.

- Use the BEEF-V acronym as a guide for choosing a top-managed site
- Construct an anchor according to SRENE/EARNEST guidelines
- Fix one end of Belay Rope to the anchor with a figure 8 on a bight and locking carabiner. The belay rope will serve two purposes:
  - Belay line for the climber. The climber will tie into the other end of the rope, and will be belayed using a remote/extended munter hitch belay (from the same Anchor #1). This system allows the staff/belayer to belay and view the participant as she/he descends.
  - Personal protection for the belayer. Prussick youself onto the line (close to the anchor) so that you may stand close to the edge and view the climber as she/he descends and climbs

- Prussick or GriGri self into the system
• Set the Munter Hitch belay
• Climber ties into the belay line with a retraced figure 8
• Perform commands, and lower participant to the ground, then belay participant as he/she re-ascends

Some special considerations when working at a top-managed site:
• Pay special attention to the “6 foot rule”—no one may be within 6 feet (or his/her height) of the edge without being protected in some way.
• Depending on the nature of the site, and how far/close the belay can be located from the edge, it may be recommended to set up a secondary anchor for participants/staff to clip into with a daisy chain or sling if the participant/staff cannot be “on belay” until he/she is closer to the edge
• Be conservative in judgments about people’s abilities. Select easier climbs to as to avoid having to create a haul system.

Belay Escapes and Rescues
(Much of the information in this section comes from the UNH Top Rope Climbing Class coursepack)
Venture most commonly engages in bottom-managed, top-rope climbing using a basic “sling-shot” belay system. Belay escapes/rescues are rarely needed in this situation, as in most cases a participant can simply be lowered to the ground. There are some cases, however, in which Venture staff may need to perform belay takeovers, belay escapes, and/or rescues. These cases can generally be categorized as:
• Bad belayer
• Bad device
• Stuck bad

Bad Belayer: A belayer is using improper technique, and the belayer is either unable or unwilling to easily and quickly correct the technique. If the belayer and device are set up correctly, the staff may need to physically take over the belay, leaving the belayer attached in the system. In this situation:
  • Approach the belayer and identify yourself and your intentions
  • Take over the brake strand of the rope and maintain a good brake
  • Add your other hand to the belay
  • Ask the original belayer to remove their hands
  • Using proper belay technique, lower the climber
  • If the belayer is uncooperative, or you are prevented from belaying correctly, proceed to the Bad Device rescue (below)

Bad Device: A belay device is improperly set up (this can be common with GriGris), jammed with hair/clothing, or a belayer is not allowing you to “replace hands.”
Stuck Bad: A climber is stuck on the wall and needs assistance in some way

In both of these cases, the belayer/belay device needs to be removed from the system, while still maintaining the integrity of the system. Doing so involves being able to go “hands free” on the belay—building systems to support the belay without physically holding. **There must always be redundancy in these systems—at a minimum there must be two systems when hands free.** The basic steps are as follows. **As with rappelling, reading this section is no substitute for regular practice. Staff must have hand-on training in these recues before managing a top-managed sit.**
From baseline, you can go “hands free” to address situations. Some common occurrences may be:

- Mule off the munter (being used to belay) to lock the belay
- Create a LTH from the rope (Klemheist) back to the anchor (munter mule)
- Back up the LTH with a clove hitch on the rope itself

Rescues in top-managed rappel or climbing situations tend to be more complicated, but follow the same principles of backing up the system. Regardless of the specific situation, the first step is to go to “baseline”:

- Mule off the munter (being used to belay) to lock the belay
- Create a LTH from the rope (Klemheist) back to the anchor (munter mule)
- Back up the LTH with a clove hitch on the rope itself

From baseline, you can go “hands free” to address situations. Some common occurrences may be:

- Rappeller has hair/clothing stuck in their rappel device. In this case undo the munter mule on the rappel line, and give the participant slack in the rope (remember the participant is being supported by the belay rope at this point) to work out whatever is stuck. When finished, re-do the mule.
- Rappeller is “mentally stuck” and unable/unwilling to continue lowering him/herself. In this situation, you must change the set-up to a lower with the belay rope. To do so, go to baseline on the belay rope (see above), undo the mule on the rappel rope and run the rappel rope through the anchor. Return to the belay rope, undo mule, and lower participant.
- Climber is unable to continue on the climb (and lowering is not an option, as there is no walk-around). In this situation, create a “Bachman-Klemheist” as part of baseline. Instead of a regular Klemheist, to allow for easier re-setting. This knot is referred to as the Ratchet and serves to hold in place any hauling that has been done. Place a friction hitch on the rope going towards the climber, add a carabiner (this where be where you pull). Undo the mule. Run the rope from the master point down to the carabiner on the friction hitch. Pull! The ratchet will “hold” progress. You’ll need to re-set the ratchet regularly and tie a new clove hitch on occasion.

**Caving**

As of 2013 Venture is not caving, due to:

- Unknown effects of bat white nose fungus on humans
- Prevention of the further spread of white nose fungus

Thus, for the sake of utility and brevity, caving policies and procedures are not included in this edition of the manual. Should caving resume, it is recommended to re-establish policies and procedures. The policies and procedures in the previous trip staff manual should be used as a guide, with any additions or changes based on current industry practices.
Cross-Country Skiing

Purpose

• See backpacking/winter backpacking sections
• To provide an outdoor pursuit during winter months
• To enjoy snow and cold weather

Staff Responsibilities

• Ski Emergency Kit: On un-patrolled trails, the group must carry, in addition to the standard first aid kit, a ski emergency kit. Typically this kit should contain a backpacking stove, small pot, high energy food, jello powder (or another powder to make a warm, sweet liquid), duct tape, matches & lighter, headlamp/flaishlight, map & compass, sunscreen, pocket knife, space blanket

• Staff should also carry the following: Extra hats, mittens, warm torso layer, water, and food.

• At least one staff member must be experienced in cross-country skiing. All staff members should be familiar with cold weather and winter camping.

• Special instruction will be given to participants on the topics of hypothermia, frostbite, and dressing in layers

• Instructors should set a good example by monitoring their own temperature, eating and drinking frequently, adding or removing clothing as needed, and doing self-checks for frostbite (toes and fingers).

Risk Management Considerations

• Give a “safety talk” with a special focus on cold weather dangers

• A lead and sweep skiing will be designated. All participants must stay between lead and sweep. A staff member should be or be near the lead and sweep at all times.

• It is prohibited for staff or participants to ski alone.

• Encourage participants to do regular buddy checks looking for signs of frostbite and hypothermia

• Each participant should carry water and staff should encourage participants to drink frequently, even if they do not feel thirsty.

• Gather after significant downhills, at creek crossings, and on top of long rises to check in and brief the group as necessary.

Teaching Outline. Instruction may take place on the following topics:

• Movement in Place
  o Putting on skis, left v. right
  o Stretching
  o Falling down and getting up
  o Side step
  o Stationary turns
  o Basic body position
  o Edge control

• Forward motion without poles
  o Shuffle with proper body position
  o Walk
  o Glide
  o Arm swing
  o Jog
  o Step turn on curves

• Forward motion with poles
  o Introduce poles, purpose, how to put them on, use of strap
Plant slanted back
Follow through

- Hills
  - Side stepping, diagonal slide, herringbone, traverse with kick turn (ascend)
  - Snow plow, turns, controlled fall (descent)

- Trails
  - Breaking a trail
  - Etiquette—downhill skiiers have the right of way, single file track, pass on the left

- Care of Equipment
  - Take of skis as road crossings, rocks, etc.
  - Water: avoid build-up of ice on skis

Whitewater Sports—Kayaking and Canoeing

Purpose
- To provide a novel and natural environment to challenge the individual and the group
- To provide paired interaction between group members in tandem canoeing
- To enable participants to become attuned with the dynamics of moving water

Staff Responsibilities
- Venture does not take students on water that is class III or over. Rare exceptions may occur when there is one class III on a given section of river. In such cases the rapid is scouted, staff are placed downstream, and participants go through one at a time.
- There should be a minimum of 2 staff with formal training in swift water rescue
- Staff trained in Swift Water Rescue must carry the following equipment on their PFD or person: 2 prussiks, 2 carabiners, a knife and a whistle (prussiks and carabiners may be in the boat).
- All staff must have a throw rope stowed and easily accessible
- At least one staff member must have reconnoitered the area to be paddled and will have knowledge of:
  - Difficult areas
  - Potential hazards
  - Minimum and maximum water level for running the river
  - Minimum time needed to complete the trip
  - Accessibility of help
  - Extra equipment required

- Instructors will decide when a rapid or section of the river needs to be portaged by one or all of the participants. Staff must take into consideration: the water level, the weather, the air and water temperatures, the time of day, and the skill level, energy level, and preparedness of the group. In diminished conditions it may be appropriate to portage some rapids, avoid the more challenging lines, or even abort the trip entirely.

Risk Management Considerations
- PFDs will be worn and securely fastened when engaged in all white water activities, and when in engaged in activities at river edge that could lead to falling in.
- PFDs must:
  - Meet standards set by the US or Canadian Coast Guard
  - Be an appropriate time (type III, for whitewater)
  - Be an appropriate size and fit
  - Have sufficient buoyancy
- Is in serviceable conditions, with zippers and clasps function and no significant rips or tears
- Be checked to ensure they cannot be pulled off over the shoulders

- Helmets: Suitable whitewater helmets must be worn
- Clothing: Adequate warm clothing must be taken on the river
- Footwear: Shoes must be worn while in the water. Participants should wear shoes while in the boat. Exceptions should only be made if one’s shoes significantly hinder one’s ability to wet exit (i.e. are big and get stuck in the boat). Sandals must have heel straps.
- Float Bags: Utilize float bags as much as possible, placing 1-2 float bags in the rear of each kayak
- Lead and sweep boats will be designated. The lead boat will not be passed. The sweep boat will stay near the end.
- Groups will remain together, regrouping after each major rapid.
- Staff will go first and reconnoiter rapids before participants go through. This can usually be done from one’s boat.
- Scouting Rapids: At each major rapid, the group should identify obstacles, judge the current, and propose a route. As appropriate and especially where there are significant hazards present, it is best to scout from score to provide more time and clarify of communications.
- See section in Emergency Procedures for Lightning Policy

Teaching Outline

- Pool Sessions: Venture hosts two pre-trip pool sessions for whitewater kayaking trips and strongly encourages all participants to attend both sessions. We have found that the extra session helps participants greatly with basic boat comfort and control. **It is required for participants to attend at least one session and successfully pass the water comfort test and execute a wet exit.** Rare exceptions may be made if an individual has previous experience which can be confirmed by Venture staff. Below are listed basic topics to cover. A more detailed outline may be found in the Appendix.
  - Session I: Stretches, body positions, boat nomenclature & equipment, water comfort text, wet exit demo and practice, hand of god rescues, bow rescue demo and practice, sweep & draw paddle strokes
  - Session II: Stretches, review and practice wet exit and bow rescues, body position, paddler’s box, rotation, strokes (sweep, draw, forward, bow draw), braces, leans, game to practice.
- Staff must stress that water activities are potentially hazardous. In the safety talk, the following should be covered
  - River Hazards, especially foot entrapments, undercut rocks, strainers, and holes.
  - Hypothermia. Participants should be taught to recognize and treat hypothermia. All staff and participants should bring an extra layer for warmth.
  - Swim Policy and Swimming Rapids Policy (see previous section)
  - Breeches and pins and what to do if encountered
  - What to do if they or others capsize
    - Wet exit and whitewater swimmer’s position, bow rescue, roll. We have had a couple of incidents during bow rescues in which participants were struck in the head or hand by a rescuer’s boat. Try to make contact with a capsized boat near the bow/stern and then slide your boat to the middle, allowing the participant’s hands to reach the rescue boat
- Teach and have participants practice (as appropriate):
  - Inspecting and fitting a PFD
  - Whitewater swimmer’s position
o Swimming with a boat/paddle
o Wet exits and self-rescue
o Boat handling, strokes, maneuvers, body positions, reading the water etc.

o River Signals
  ▪ Vertical paddle—all clear, come ahead
  ▪ Horizontal paddle—stop
  ▪ Paddle at 45 degree angle—go in the direction the paddle is pointing
  ▪ Rotating paddle in a circle/waving paddle—help
  ▪ Tap one’s head: Are you okay? / I’m okay

o Use of throw ropes

Specific Rapid Policies
• The Chattooga: **Participants will not run Bull Sluice**
• The French Broad: **Frank Bells Rapid will be run only after participants have scouted it, have been given the option to go down the left side of the river, and have been instructed in how to get out of a hydraulic**

**Whitewater Sports—Rafting**
Venture currently contracts out all rafting operations to companies with adequate training and qualifications for guides, along with acceptable safety records. Per Venture’s Accreditation with the Association for Experiential Education, we must request training/qualification information along with accident/incident analysis for all contracted companies. While on a guided rafting trip, Venture staff are generally to defer responsibility and judgment to the rafting professionals. Having such professionals in place, however, does not abdicate all responsibility from Venture staff. Venture staff should ensure all Venture policies/procedures are being upheld, should aid in organization/group management, should ensure all participants are accounted for, and should speak up if something seems amiss.

**Kayak Roll Clinics**
**Purpose**
• To provide a physical challenge in a local setting
• To introduce participants to whitewater boating, including basic nomenclature and boat comfort
• To develop an extremely helpful whitewater paddling skill

**Staff Responsibilities**
• Staff are encouraged to tailor roll sessions to specific clients and client groups. Some groups are large and consist mainly of beginners, while others are smaller and more experienced. Staff are to use their best judgment as to how to best use the time at the pool.
• Staff are to be aware that different people have different boat comfort and some may progress much faster than others. Adopt a general philosophy of not moving on to the next step until a participant is ready (within reason, and taking into account the needs of others).
• Stress proper form, starting with hip snaps and head positions. Work to ingrain good habits.
• Encourage participants to take breaks

**Risk Management Considerations**
• **All participants must sign a pool kayak waiver**
• **All participants must pass the water comfort test. If a participant does not pass, he/she must wear PFD while in the pool.**
• **Do no allow a participant to stay underwater for more than 10 seconds;** if a person is working on holding his/her breath underwater, perform a hand of god rescue once he/she has been under for 10 seconds
• Be aware of slippery pool decks

Teaching Outline (change as necessary to fit the needs of participants)

• Session 1: Stretching, boat nomenclature, fitting participants to boats, wet exit on land (tuck, pull, push), wet exits (do at least 3 if a person is nervous), underwater comfort (have participants tap the sides of the boat while underwater, then do a hand of god, to boost comfort and confidence), hip snaps (keeping head down), working up to a full bow rescue.

• Session 2: Review from session 1. Introduce the paddle. Stress proper set-up. Progress from positioning participants’ paddles to having them do their own positioning. Troubleshooting: if they paddle impedes their hip snap, take a step back and have them hip snap/roll with hands on a kick board. Re-introduce the paddle once this skill is solid.

• Session 3: Follow up with problems, troubleshooting, introduce off-sides roll and hands roll if applicable.

Flatwater Kayaking & Canoeing

Purpose

• To provide a novel and natural environment to challenge the individual and the group

• To provide paired interaction between group member (in tandem boats)

Staff Responsibilities

• Staff must carry a whistle on their PFD or on their person. All staff must have a throw rope stowed and easily accessible. A spare paddle should be available.

• Instructors will decide when it is appropriate to paddle the intended route. Staff must take many factors, including: wind, weather, temperature (air and water), time of day, skill level, and preparedness. In diminished conditions, it may be appropriate to alter the route, stay close to shore (avoid open crossings), or abort altogether.

Risk Management Considerations

• Staff must stress the potential hazards inherent in water activities, including (but not limited to) hypothermia & drowning.

• Follow swim policy (see previous section)

• Properly fitted PFDs must be worn while in a boat on the water. (see whitewater section for proper fitting of PFDs)

• Be sure to take adequate warm clothing in the boat, even if it is a relatively warm day

• Shoes must be worn while on or in the water. Sandals are acceptable, but must have a backstrap.

• Lead and sweep boats will be designated. The group should remain as close together as possible Do not split into sub-groups

• Participants should have knowledge and practice of what to do if they capsize. Generally this skill will be practiced in the pool during the pre-trip meeting. If a participant missed the meeting, allow them to practice at the beginning of the trip, if conditions allow.

• Participants should be taught and be aware of river hazards, if applicable (strainers, holes) and lake hazards, if applicable (wind, wavers, motorized crafts)

• It is helpful to teach river signals to aid in communication while on the water
  o Vertical paddle: all clean
  o Horizontal: stop
  o 45 degree angle: go the direction pointed
  o Rotating paddle in a circle: group up, get to shore

• Follow lightning protocols, when applicable (see page XX)
Sea Kayaking

Purpose

- To provide a unique natural environment in which to challenge the individual and the group
- To experience the coastal environment

Staff Responsibilities

- **Staff should carry the following emergency equipment:** signal flares (or other emergency signaling device), whistles, and throw ropes.
- At least one staff member will have reconnoitered the area to be paddled and will know
  - Technical difficult and dangers of route
  - Route, tides, currents, and typical wind patterns
  - Minimum time needed to complete the trip
  - Accessibility of help
  - Alternate routes
- No crossing of over 1.5 miles (without intervening land or salt marshes) should be made under less than favorable conditions (i.e. clear weather, relatively calm water, favorable breezes, tides, currents, positive weather report, good attitude and physical condition of participants)
- A pair of binoculars may be helpful in checking long crossings
- When faced with a capsize in difficult conditions: if one end of the boat sinks, or there are accompanying injuries, or if there are multiple capsizes, consider using emergency signaling devices to request help from nearby boaters or the Coast Guard.

Risk Management Considerations

- **On chilly days or days with chilly water, participants will be instructed in recognition and treatment of hypothermia before getting on the water**
- **Properly fitted PFDs must be worn at all time when on the water** (see whitewater kayaking section for proper fitting)
- **Flotation:** Suitable flotation must be secured in any bow or stern that does not have a secure bulkhead
- **Follow the swim policy** (see previously section). Use extra caution.
- **Lead and sweep boats will be designated.** The group should stay as close as possible, and not split into sub-groups.
- **Launching and landing in surf or waves:** The most experienced staff member should be the last to launch in surf. The second most experienced staff member should go our first and gather the group once through the waves. All others besides the last person can be assisted physically, until they have their spray skirts on and are underway. When landing, the strongest staff paddles should land first and then help all others land. The second staff person should stay out and help with the timing, so too many boats to not land at once. This person should also standby to assist with the rescue of any capsizes vessels.
- Secure all gear etc. being stored on the boat/in the cockpit, to ensure it stays secure in the event of a capsize. **It is very important that there be no lines of gear that might interfere with a person doing a wet exit**.
- **Capsize:** Staff members need to communicate to participants what they should do if they capsize or if another participant does. Specialized rescue techniques, including rafting, bailing, bilge pumps, towing, re-entry and basic assisted rescue techniques should be discussed. The preferred method of rescue for a single kayak is for victim to move to stern of boat to push it down (even to point of climbing on top of the stern while the rescuer(s) lift(s) the bow. If the boat is kept upside down, the water will flow to the bulkhead then fall out cockpit. Then boat can be flipped and steadied while victim climbs back in. This approach
removes most of the water from the boat and removes the need to do lots of bailing with the bilge pump, which is a slow, tiring process.

- **Paddling is typically conducted in times of good visibility. Unless there is an emergency situation, all low-visibility paddling is done within 100 yards of shore.**
- Adequate clothing should be taken on all trips. Paddling jackets should be easily accessible when on the water.
- Bring a spare paddle.
- **Follow lightning protocols (see page XX)**

### Solos

**Purpose**

- To provide an opportunity for self-appraisal, quiet reflection and connecting with the natural world.

**Staff Responsibilities**

- Solo is not meant as a survival test. Adequate water, food, shelter, sleeping bag & pad, and clothing should be available so students will be comfortable.
- Conduct a briefing so participants understand the purpose of the solo and how they might use their time, safety and environmental concerns.
- Staff writes on a map (or sketch) the participant & location of each site
- Staff will do a visual check of each person on solo at least once every 12 hours
- Staff will conduct a debriefing following the solo experience

**Risk Management Concerns**

- When placing students at solo sites, it is usually appropriate to offer the site and let individuals volunteer. Students who may required additional supervision or support should be placed nearer to staff site. The specific boundaries of the site should be pointed out.
- Fires will not be used on solo except by special permission of the direction
- All students will be briefed on:
  - The location of the staff base site
  - The use of whistles in an emergency (3 blows, repeated until response, means need for emergency assistance)
  - Not wandering or visiting others. If support is needed, visit the staff site.
  - Not engaging with strangers
  - Pick-up and check-in protocols
  - Participants to not read books or use watched. They are encouraged to write in their journals
  - Teach and follow lightning policy (see page XX)
Chapter 4: Equipment & How To’s

What to Bring

Group Gear
Of course, group gear will depend on the nature of the activity. Group Equipment Lists are available in the Appendix. The minimum required gear for any trip is:

- First Aid Kit (fully checked and stocked)
- Trip Report
- Relevant Maps
- Participant medical history forms
- Emergency Contact Roster

For any overnight trip, the list is expanded to include:

- Tents (appropriate number of tents, and appropriate tents for gender balance)
- Kitchen tarp
- Stoves (with repair supplies, including pump cup oil, wrench, gaskets, o-rings for whisperlites), with lighter & matches
- Fuel (appropriate fuel for stoves, appropriate amounts)
- Dromedary (or dromedaries)
- Pots/lids/pans/utensils
- Trowel/TP kit
- Water filters

For winter trips (roughly October/November through March/April)

- Snow shovel & chains must be kept in the vehicle
- It is advisable, depending on the severity of the weather to bring extra warm clothes and a back-up stove

For White water boating

- Boats
- Paddles
- PFDs
- Spray Skirts
- Dry Bags (as needed)
- Throw ropes
- Water First Aid Kit Bag
- Helmets (whitewater)
- Rescue Kit (whitewater)

For Sea Kayaking

- Boats
- Paddles
- PFDs
- Spray Skirts
- Dry Bags (as needed)
- Throw ropes
- Water First Aid Kit Bag
- Bilge pumps
- Paddle floats
- Emergency flares
- Weather radio
For Climbing
- Ropes
- Harnesses
- Helmets
- Shoes
- Anchor building supplies (appropriate to the setting)—carabiners, webbing, cordelette, static rope
- Belay devices & carabiners
- Rescue Bag
- Slings

**Personal Clothing & Equipment**
As with group gear, personal clothing will vary greatly depending on the circumstances. Individual Equipment Lists are available in the Appendix.

Generally, participants should dress in or bring layers of synthetic clothing. Synthetic (or wool/silk), rather than cotton, is appropriate for outdoor use as it dries more quickly than cotton and retains heat while wet; cotton does not insulate once it is wet. Gear for a standard (3 season, multi-day) backpacking trip is listed below. Adjustments must be made for trips of different lengths, activities, or weather. See the Appendix for details.

**Feet:** 2-3 pairs heavy wool socks, 2-3 pairs polypropylene or silk sock liners (optional), camp shoes, hiking books

**Upper body:** 1-2 synthetic t shirts, 1-2 lightweight synthetic base layers, 1 mid-weight fleece layer, 1 warm fleece jacket, 1 rain jacket, sports bras (if applicable), warm wool/fleece hat

**Lower body:** Quick drying shorts, 1-2 pairs non-cotton long pants/long underwear, rain pants, underwear

**Equipment:** Backpack, synthetic sleeping bag, sleeping pad, eating supplies, 2-3 water bottles, headlamp, bandanas

**Hygiene:** Toothbrush & toothpaste, chapstick, sunscreen, period kit (females)

**Optional:** Watch, camera, stuff stacks, trekking poles, sunglasses, hat with a brim, journal, crazy creek chair, pocket knife

**Borrowing from Venture**
Venture has a robust fleet of personal gear for loan during trips. We believe an essential part of trip accessibility is providing extensive loaner gear to all participants. From the above basic backpacking list, the only things Venture cannot provide are: Boots, camp shoes, t-shirts, bras/underwear, shorts, and the hygiene and optional items. Everything else can be provided at no cost. All additional boating and climbing gear can also be borrowed at no additional cost

**How To**
The following is not a comprehensive guide to all of the technical skills you’ll need in the backcountry, but can serve as a good reminder or refresher of your skills.

**Bear Bag Setup**
Equipment Needed
• 100' of 6 mm or bigger rope
• Designated stuff sacks (waterproof preferred)
• 2 Carabiners

Setup Recommendations
• 200 ft away from campsite.
• Horizontal limb at least 3" in diameter.
• At least 10 ft above ground.
• At least 4 ft below limb that it is hung from.
• 4 ft away from any tree trunks or tree branches.

Instructions
• Find a tree with a live branch. The branch should be at least 10 feet from the ground with no object below the branch that could support a bear's weight. The point at which you will toss the rope over the branch should be at least 10 feet from the tree. The branch should be at least 3 inches in diameter.
• Throw the rope over the branch. Test the branch to make sure it is strong enough to hold the weight (don't be standing directly underneath when you test). Make a Butterfly knot about 6 feet from the ground and clip Carabiner 1 into the bight.
• Feed the running end of Rope End B through Carabiner 2 and then through Carabiner 1.
• Pull the end of the Rope End A to move Carabiner 1 as close to the tree branch as possible. Tie off Rope End A to the tree.
• Attach the food bag to Carabiner 2 and haul the bag as high up as possible. Tie off Rope End B.
• To retrieve the bag, untie Rope End B and lower the bag to the ground.

Other Hanging Methods
• Throw one end of the rope over the limb (a stick or other form of weight may need to be added to the end of the rope), making sure the other end is being held onto.
• Once the rope is over the limb, tie a figure eight on a bight to one end of the rope then clip the carabiner to it. Keep this end on the ground and tie the other end to a nearby tree.
Stove Setup
WhisperLite Operating Instructions
The WhisperLite only burns white gas.

Prepare Fuel Bottle
- Fill Fuel Bottle to fill line only. Air space is necessary for fuel expansion.
- Insert Pump into Fuel Bottle and firmly tighten.
- Close the Pump Control Valve, stroke Plunger 20-30 strokes. Less fuel requires more strokes or pressure. Pump until firm resistance is felt.

Set-up
- Unfold the 3 Pot Supports. Snap each Pot Support into a rim detent.
- Place stove on the center of Heat Reflector.

Connect Stove & Pump
- Lubricate the entire brass end of the Fuel Line with saliva or oil.
- Completely insert the brass end of the Fuel Line into Pump. Place Fuel Bottle on its side so Pump Control Valve points up.

Preheat Stove
- Open Pump Control Valve 1 1/2 turns and let fuel flow through the Jet. Release only 1/2 spoonful of fuel. Close Pump Control Valve. Look for fuel in Priming Cup.
- Light fuel in the Priming Cup. A brief soccer ball-size flame is normal.

Turn Stove On
- Wait for preheat flame to reduce in size (approximately 2 minutes). If flame goes out, wait 5 minutes for stove to cool before relighting.
- Open Pump Control Valve 1/2 turn and wait for steady blue flame.
- Slowly open Pump Control Valve.

Use Stove to Cook
- Set up Windscreen. Fold the ends of the Windscreen together. Leave a 1-inch gap between Windscreen and pot for optimal performance. Use Windscreen to improve performance in all conditions.
- Place pot on stove.
- Maintain Fuel Bottle pressure. Add approximately 10 strokes every 10 minutes to maintain performance. Hold Fuel Bottle firmly while pumping.

Turn Stove Off
- Close Pump Control Valve. Residual fuel will continue to burn with a small flame.
• After flames are out, wait 5 minutes for stove to cool.
• Unlock Catch Arm and remove Fuel Line from Pump.
• Depressurize Fuel Bottle and repack stove. Hold the Fuel Bottle upright, away from your face and any sources of heat or ignition. Slowly unscrew pump to depressurize Fuel Bottle.
• To transport or store the Fuel Bottle, the Pump may be left inside a depressurized Fuel Bottle. The Pump can also be removed and replaced with the Fuel Bottle Cap.

Stove Warnings
• Use MSR fuel bottles only. Non-MSR fuel bottles may leak fuel, causing fire and injury. Keep children away from stove and fuel. Never leave a burning or hot stove unattended.
• Keep combustibles at least 4 ft. away from the top and sides of a burning stove. Use this stove for cooking food and boiling water only. Never use it for any other purpose. When temperatures are below -10 F, O-rings may be stiff and prone to fuel leakage. Use extreme caution in temperatures below freezing.
• Before every use, look for fuel on the Fuel Bottle, Pump, Fuel Line, and Burner. Do not light the stove if you see or smell fuel. Never disconnect the Fuel Line, Pump, or Fuel Bottle when the stove is in use or fuel will leak, ignite, and burn you. Leaking or spilled fuel may ignite and burn you.
• Never place your head or body above the stove to light or cook with it. Never use excess fuel to preheat stove.
• Relighting a warm stove may cause large flames that can burn you. Let the stove cool 5 minutes before relighting. Accessible parts may be very hot. Never move a hot or burning stove.
• Keep the Fuel Bottle away from the stove burner or other heat sources. Keep Burner and Fuel Bottle separated with the Windscreen. An overheated Fuel Bottle can explode and burn or injure you. Never use cookware with a diameter greater than 9 inches. Large cookware reflects excessive heat. Never operate stove with empty or dry pots. Never use non-MSR reflectors or diffusers.
• Do not store Fuel Bottle near heat or ignition sources, such as water heaters, stoves, pilot lights, furnaces, and electrical devices. Keep the Fuel Bottle tightly closed in a cool, well-ventilated place. Use extreme caution when storing stove fuel.

Water Filter Setup
Katadyn Hiker Pro Instructions
The Katadyn Hiker is designed to remove bacteria and protozoan cysts such as Giardia and Cryptosporidium. To extend cartridge life, always use the best water source available. Keep the intake prefilter clean and off the bottom. In heavy sediment conditions, wrap a coffee filter or bandanna around the intake prefilter. Where possible, place untreated water in container and wait for sediment to settle out until water appears clear; then filter from water above the sediment.
• Before each use, flush and discard a small amount (5 – 10 strokes) of water to remove stale taste. Place input hose in untreated water source. Adjust the float to keep prefilter off the bottom and away from sediment.
• Insert the EasyFill Bottle Adaptor into a clean water container.
• Make sure the hoses are not kinked. Begin pumping the handle in a slow, steady manner. Approximately 48 strokes per minute = 1 liter of water.
• After filling water container with filtered water, remove bottle adaptor from container and prefiltro from water source. Continue pumping to remove remaining water from pump body.
• Store unit in the carry bag. To prevent the possibility of cross contamination, remove the output hose and EasyFill Bottle Adaptor and store separately in a re-sealable bag inside the carry bag (in order to prevent cross contamination).

Troubleshooting
If handle is hard to push:
• Lubricate pump handle o-ring. Silicone lubricant is provided with your new unit. Remove handle collar and handle. Clean excess build-up from black rubber o-ring on bottom of handle. Place a small amount of silicone lubricant all the way around the o-ring. Re-assemble.
• Clogged cartridge. A clogged cartridge requires replacement. As a temporary solution in the field, remove the cartridge and swish it around in water. Take care that untreated water does not contact the cartridge output barb. If flow is not restored, replace cartridge.

If unit pumps easily, but no water flow:
• Make sure prefiltro is submerged.
• Make sure that hoses are not blocked or pinched.
• Clean check valve. Occasionally, sediment may enter pump body and prevent check valve from operating properly. This may cause lack of water draw. The check valve can easily be cleaned to restore maximum water output. Remove the cartridge. Fill the pump housing half way with water, swirl around and discard water. Fill the housing half way with water again and reinstall cartridge. Pump slowly to get water started and resume normal pump rate when flow has begun.

Prefiltro:
• Rinse the prefiltro in water to remove any particles that may be caught in the strainer. For a more thorough cleaning, remove the prefiltro from the input hose and clean with water and a soft brush. Re-assemble. Apply a small amount of silicone lubricant to the strainer barb to ease assembly.
• For use without the weight. The prefiltro is functional with or without the weight. To use without the weight, remove the strainer barb from the input hose. Re-assemble without the weight.

Replacing the cartridge:
• Remove output hose from cartridge output barb. Grasp the top of the cartridge and unscrew counterclockwise. If on trail, pack out used cartridge and discard in trash receptacle.
• Rinse inside of cartridge housing by swishing with clear water (non-filtered water is ok). Discard water. Wipe inside of housing and housing threads with soft cloth to remove sediment.
• Remove new cartridge from packaging.
• Insert new cartridge into housing and tighten clockwise.
• Reattach output hose to cartridge output barb.
• Flush cartridge by pumping and discarding the first liter.
Tarp Setup

Ridgeline

- If not already attached, attach two pieces of p-cord to grommets on opposite ends of the middle of the tarp. Attach p-cord to grommets using a girth hitch with one end of the cordage being only 3-4 inches long and the rest of the length on the other end (this is the working end).

- Attach the working end of the p-cord to a tree or other stationary object with a bowline knot. Make sure you tie the p-cord around the tree 1-2 feet higher than you desire the height of the tarp. As you tighten the tarp and stake out the corners, the tarp will lower.

- Attach the other ridgeline p-cord to a tree using the Tautline Hitch or Trucker’s Hitch. Remember to tie this side higher than you desire the tarp height.

- For the corners:
  - Either stake them out, using a clove hitch to attach the stake to the p-cord
  - Or use a tautline hitch to tie to trees, roots, etc. and then adjust.
Clove Hitch

Truckers Hitch
Chapter 5: Games!
(special thanks to the Harvard FOP manual for much of this section)
Games can be great fun and can have many purposes for a group in the outdoors. From learning each other’s names, to passing the time, to providing structure on an otherwise easy day, it is essential for all good leaders to have a few games up their sleeve. This section is by no means comprehensive, but should give you a few ideas to build on your games repertoire. Games are broken down into different types: name & introduction games, cooperative games, warm-up games, and on-the-trail games. When considering a game, keep in mind:

- Purpose
- Group Dynamics (do folks know each other yet? Are they getting along?)
- Comfort (are they the type of group to do a silly game?)
- Safety (be aware of your surroundings and hazards)
- Debrief/processing (will you debrief the activity? How? Not? Is it just for fun?)
- One-person-out-games can be fun…but they can also make a person feel, well, left out. Choose them wisely and don’t play one if there are some folks who already appear left out

Name & Introduction Games

Noodle Tap
- One person is in the middle, with a noodle (or sweatshirt, or whatever). The rest of the group stands in a circle around this person. Someone in the circle says someone else’s name (not the person in the middle). The person in the middle has to tap the person whose name was said with the noodle before he/she can say someone else’s name. Success? Switch who is in the middle? Too slow? Continue until success.

Bang!
- One person is in the middle of a circle. That person calls out the name of a person in the group. The person called ducks and the people on each side turn and “shoot” each other, but instead of saying Bang, say the other person’s name. The person who is last goes into the middle of the circle.

Name with Action
- Stand in a circle. One person starts, saying “My name is _____ and I like to _____”, while miming the action. The who group repeats “His/her name is _____ and he/she likes to _____” (all miming the action). Continue around the circle like this. As you’d like, repeat everyone who has gone before after a new person goes.

Name with Adjective
- Stand in a circle. One person starts, and says their name and an adjective, starting with the same letter as his/her first name, that describes him/her. The next person says his/her name & adjective, then repeats the first person, and so on. The last person has quite the challenge, typically!

Name Blanket
- The group splits into two teams, and the leaders hold up a blanket (or rain fly, or whatever) to hide the two teams from each other. The teams crouch in a line behind their side of the blanket. When the blanket is dropped, the people at the head of the two lines shout out the name of the opposite head of the line. The last one to call the correct name changes sides.

Me-You-You-Me
- Stand in a circle. One person rotates 180 degrees and faces the person on his/her left. Let’s, for example, say Spongebob turned around to face Patrick They shake hands and say (like they’re meeting each other!):
- Person 1: “Spongebob” (i.e. my name is Spongebob)
- Person 2: Patrick (i.e. my name is Patrick)
- Person 1: Patrick (i.e. ah yes, you are Patrick)
- Person 2: Spongebob (i.e. ah yes, you are Spongebob)
  - Note the pattern of “me-you-you-me”
  - The person in the middle continues around the inside of the circle, followed by the next person, and so on. Many people are moving at once—as soon as Spongebob moves on, Patrick turns 180 and starts.

Introduce Your Partner
- Split into group of 2-3, and give the groups a few questions to ask each other. After a few minutes, bring the group back together and have the partners introduce each other.

M&Ms
- Pass a bag of M&M’s (or a roll of toilet paper!) around, and let people take as many (or as many squares) as they want. Then go around the circle—everyone has to share X amount of facts about themselves, where X is the number of candies he/she took.

Name Swap
- Everyone mingle and shares 2-3 facts about him/herself with another person. After the facts get shared, the two people swap names and facts (so if Spongebob was talking to Patrick, Spongebob now moves on to introduce himself as Patrick and share Patrick’s facts). Let a few rounds pass, then circle up and share “your” name and facts. Can’t remember? Be creative!

All My Friends and Neighbors
- Stand in a circle with one person in the middle. The person in the middle says “Hi my name is ______”. Group responds “Hi ______”. Person responds: “all my friends and neighbors who… (says something true about him/herself)”. If this fact is also true for others, these people must leave their spot in the circle and find a new one (not directly next to the old one!). Last person with no space? Go to the middle & repeat.

World Map
- The leader stands at the “center of the Universe” (i.e. UNC Charlotte) and asks a series of questions, relating to location. For example: where are you from, where were you born, where is your favorite place to travel to, where do you see yourself living in 10 years? After each question, participants situate themselves relative to the “center of the universe” according to their answers.

**Cooperative Games/Initiatives**

**Count to 10**
- The group counts to 10 without talking to each other, with only one person saying each number (no planning time is given and no pattern can be established). If two people say a number at the same time, the group must begin again.

**Human (or p-cord) knot**
- Everyone stands in a circle and sticks both hands into the middle. People grab random hands, forming a human knot. Undo the knot! You can also use p-cord: everyone hold a piece, passed the other end to another person, then make a knot, then untie it.

**Impulse**
- Everyone sits or likes on their stomachs facing into the middle of a circle, with hands interlinked and placed palm down on the ground (so that a person’s right hand is to the right of his/her neighbor’s left hand and left hand to the left of his/her neighbor’ right hand). Someone starts by slapping one hand onto the ground, and the impulse travels around the circle with hands slapping the ground in order one at a time. If someone slaps...
the ground twice, the impulse changes directions. Whenever a hand misses a turn, or slaps at the wrong time, that hand must be removed from the middle of the circle until only two hands remain.

**Touch My Can**
- The group must position a small object (like a can or a water bottle) such that every person is touching it with some part of the body except one person, who must touch it with his/her nose. In addition, no person can be touching another person!

**Blind Polygon**
- Everyone is blindfolded and stands in a circle with both hands holding a bear bag rope, which is tied into a loop. They make different shapes with the rope: triangle, square, etc. Increase the challenge by muting some people!

**Helium Stick**
- Have the group stand in a line on both sides of a stick or a tent pole. Each person puts one finger out to support the tent pole. The group must then lower the pole to the ground, while everyone maintains contact with the pole. Easier said than done!

**Silent Line-Ups**
- Without talking, have the group line up in order of...first name (alphabetical), middle name (alphabetical), last name (alphabetical), birthday (not birthdate), etc.

**Popsicle Push-Ups**
- The group must do a push up as a group, with no one’s feet on the ground, and everyone’s hands on the ground.

**Traffic Jam**
- Divide the group into two and have them form two lines facing each other. Have each person form a “spot” where they are standing by drawing a line around themselves, standing on a pieces of paper, or marking their place in some other way. There should be one empty “spot” between the two groups.

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**Warm-Up Games**

**Enemy-Protector**
- Stand in a circle. Tell the group to silently choose another person to be his/her “enemy” and another person to be his/her “protector.” When the game starts, the goal is to keep one’s protector between oneself and one’s enemy. Hilarious.

**Giants, Wizards, Elves**
- Kind of like whole-group rock-paper-scissors. Divide the group into two teams. As a team, the group decides whether to be giants, wizards, or elves. Once decided, the two teams face off; elves trick wizards, wizard enchant giants, giants crush elves. The “winning” team chases the losing team back past an established safe line. Anyone tagged joins the winning team. Repeat.

**Knee Tag**
- Tag, except you can only tag on the knees. You can cover your knees with your hands, but you can’t move when doing so. If out, you can get back in if someone gives you “high 10” (and in doing so leaves his/her own knees open to attack!)

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**On the Trail Games (or time-fillers)**

**Two Truths and a Lie**
- Everyone shares two truth and a lie about him/herself. The group tries to decipher fact from fiction

**Ghost**
The idea here is to not be the person to finish a word. Someone starts to spell a word (any word), with one letter. The next person gives the second letter to any potential real word. The next person gives the third letter to any potential real word but WITHOUT spelling a full word. The person who spells a real word first loses. Note that at all times the letters should be able to spell a real word (so: hpy is not an acceptable sequence!)

The Celebrity Game
- Start with a celebrity (any celebrity—it counts as long an another person can “confirm” that the person is famous in some way, be it historically, movies, music, politics, sports, etc.). The next person must say a celebrity whose first name starts with the same letter as the first celebrity’s last name (So Garth Brooks, Beyonce Knowles, Kenneth Braunaugh, Bill Clinton, Christina Aguilera...and so on). No repeats. Double letters (Sammy Sosa) reverse the order. Single names (Prince) skip the next person in line.

Contact (A great game, don’t let the directions scare you off!)
- One person thinks of any non-proper noun. He/she tells the group the first letter of the word. (So if my word were textbook, I would say “t”). The rest of the group thinks of any non-proper noun that starts with t (individually, not as a group). One person asks me a question relating to the word he/she is thinking of (so if they’re thinking of teapot, they might ask “does it boil water?”). My job is to figure out what they’re thinking of and say it; “it is not a teapot.” If I can’t figure it out, but someone else in the group does, that person says “contact” and together he/she and the person (who thought of teapot) count 1-2-3 together; on 3 they say “teapot” (or whatever they’re thinking of). If they match, I have to give the next letter of my word. And so on.

Riddles! Riddles are a great way to pass the time. Be aware, however, that some folks don’t like them; watch your group and don’t over use them if it looks like someone is feeling left out.
- A man goes to the store to buy something. He asks the clerk how much 1 costs: 50 cents. How much does 10 cost? $1. How much does 100 cost? $1.50. What’s he buying?
  - Numbers (like to put on a mailbox or house)
- Joan and Barry are dead on the floor surrounded by glass and water. What happened?
  - They are fish!
- You want to get to the best place on earth! Unfortunately, you’ve come to a crossroads, and you know one way leads to the best place on earth, and the other leads to certain doom. A person guards each way. You know one of these people always tells the truth and the other always lies. You have ONE question (total, not per person). What can you ask to assure yourself that you’ll go down the right path?
  - What path would the other person tell me to go down? Go down the opposite.
- There is a man in a garage with 53 bicycles. How did he die?
  - He cheated at poker. (Bicycles are a card brand. There are 52 cards in a deck)
- A man is found dead in the woods. Looking at him, you can immediately tell it was the pack that killed him.
  - The pack of wolves!
- A man lives on the 50th floor of a building. He can take the elevator all the way to his floor on rainy days, but on sunny days only the 15th floor. Why?
  - He’s very short. He can use his umbrella to hit the 50th floor key.
- Essential to the Resistance! You’re living in a post-apocalyptic type future, with an over-controlling government. You are part of the underground resistance here in North Carolina. There is another faction of the resistance in California. You have a t-shirt that is ESSENTIAL TO THE RESISTANCE that you must get to your compatriots in CA. (Just accept this, this riddle is not figuring out how/why this is essential. It just is). However, where you live you are not allowed to cross state lines. There is a mail system, but there are strict restrictions. Everyone must use a government-provided box to mail items. The box must be locked. You
cannot tamper with the lock. If the box is unlocked, the materials will be confiscated. How do you get the tshirt to California?
  ▪ Mail your locked box to them with the shirt. They affix their lock (so there are 2 locks), and send it back to you. You take your lock off and send it back to them. Voila.
  o There are five pieces of coal, a scarf, and a carrot lying in on a lawn. There is a perfectly good reason why. Why?
  ▪ Snowman!!! Melted!!!
  o A woman had two sons who were born on the same hour of the same day of the same year, but they were not twins. What?
  ▪ They were triplets!
  o A man rode into town on Friday. He stayed for three nights and left on Friday. How?
  ▪ Friday is his horse!
  o The man was afraid to home because the man in the mask was there. Why?
  ▪ Playing baseball!
  o A man and his son are in a car crash and the man dies and his boy needs surgery. The boy is rushed to the OR and the surgeon says “I cannot operate on this boy, he is my son.” How can this be so?
  ▪ Amazingly people don’t get this one. The surgeon is his mother.
Chapter 6: Emergency Procedures

Accident Procedures

The Venture senior instructor must take charge of the situation. If the instructor is injured, then the assistant instructor must take command. Leadership must be exercised, but remain open and flexible to suggestions.

1. Survey the situation. Don't panic. Decide what steps to take before acting.
   a. Keep in mind what to care for/be aware of. In this order:
      i. Scene
      ii. YOU
      iii. Co-leader(s)
      iv. Group
      v. Victim

2. Give first aid to the patient.
   a. Follow Wilderness First Aid protocols
      i. Primary Survey
      ii. Secondary Survey
   b. Fill out Patient Assessment Form. This form includes a SOAP note, vital signs, etc.

3. If outside help is needed, attempt to solicit help via cell phone (follow emergency communication procedures, detailed on page XX). If there is no service, designate a group of three individuals to serve as messengers and go for help. Record all information on the Patient Assessment Form and send one copy of the form with messengers. **While the messenger party is moving, the rest of the group must stay in the same place.** Messenger party should:
   a. Take essential equipment (map, compass, flashlights, food, water, matches, protective clothing, etc.). Prepare for a night out or getting lost.
   b. Half of the First Aid Kit
   c. Messengers should take completed Patient Assessment Form, a map, trip report, and emergency contact list
   d. When Arriving at a Phone: follow emergency communication procedures, detailed on page XX

4. In the event of a fatality, wait for legal authorization and photographs before moving the body.

5. Group with patient should do the following as appropriate:
   b. Set up a temporary camp.
   c. Prepare food and hot drinks for group members.
   d. Assign a person to remain with patient at all times. Monitor patient at all times. Record vital statistics at half hour intervals (or more often if called for). Watch for threats to Airway, Breathing, and/or Circulation.
   e. Try to keep all members of the group busy and safe. This will reduce the tendency for panic.

6. At the hospital: If the patient has insurance, use their insurance first. The University accident policy can also be used if this is a weekend trip for which a Venture workshop report was completed. The insurance number is at the bottom of the Workshop report.

7. After an evacuation, and especially in the case of serious injury or death:
   a. Other staff should be called to help support the staff with the group.
   b. The group as a whole needs to process the whole situation including dealing with fears,
emotions, etc. This is very important! It is strongly recommended to involve the counseling center or another professional in the event of a serious injury or death.

8. Fill out Venture Accident-­‐Incident Report Form.
9. The Director should be notified on the next workday of any accidents or incidents regardless of their severity. An accident/incident report form must be filled out on the next workday and submitted to the Director.

First Aid

Common backcountry issues
Venture adheres to Wilderness Medical Associates protocols and instructions for backcountry medicine. Please refer to the WMA field guide (located in all first aid kits) for most questions. A few of the most common backcountry issues are detailed below.

• Administering of medications
  o With the exception of epinephrine & albuterol, Venture does not carry prescription drugs.
  o The Epi-­‐pens are kept in their protective tubes until needed. Typically those who would be administering the epi-­‐pens have been through a WAFA or WFR course so have been trained in those procedures. (See page XX for details.)
  o Participants typically carry their own prescription drugs. Staff should know, from reading the medical history forms, who may be bringing meds along. Staff are encouraged to ask participants to inform them when they take medications – whether prescription or over-­‐the-­‐counter.
  o There are some nonprescription medications in the first aid kit. When appropriate, it is good to make participants aware that these are available. Typically we don’t recommend to individual that they should take a specific medication. When a participant chooses to take a med, a good practice for adults is to hand the bottle to the patient so they can get their own tablets.

• Blisters: Are usually caused by abrasion of the skin, most commonly on the heels, toes, or balls of the feet. Poorly fitted boots, new boots, padded socks, and hard hiking all tend to promote blisters. Prevention centers on frequent checking of feet and protecting even the slightest hot spot with tape or moleskin before a blister forms. Foot inspection should be done every couple of hours for the first few days of hiking.
  o For a blister or hot spot, use blister pads/tape/moleskin to relieve friction in the affected area.
  o Blisters may and should be popped and drained if they impede motion or if it is likely the blister will pop on its own. The proper method for draining a blister is a) wash the area thoroughly; b) slide a sterile needle under the skin just outside the blister and insert it into the blister; and c) gently press any fluid out and apply a sterile dressing. A broken blister should be treated like any other open wound and examined at least every morning and evening. It should also be aired as frequently as possible.

• Insect Stings and Bites
  o Local Reaction:
    ▪ Signs and Symptoms: Local pain, swelling, redness, itching.
    ▪ Treatment: Apply cold compress, relieve pain, and watch for further signs and symptoms.
  o Mild General Reaction:
    ▪ Signs and Symptoms: Mild, uncomplicated allergic skin reaction that is local to the site of the sting; anxiety; discomfort.
- Treatment: Give one Benadryl capsule and watch for signs of a more severe reaction. Give another capsule as needed.
  - Severe General Reaction: see Wilderness Protocols: Anaphylaxis: on page XX.
    - Signs and Symptoms: Swelling of the face, tongue, and upper respiratory tract, wheezing, hives, nausea, cramps, vomiting, and diarrhea. The condition can progress rapidly to convulsions, coma, and death.
    - Treatment: See Wilderness Protocola: Anaphylaxis: on page XX.
- Poison Ivy: This plant can be a non-climbing wood shrub or a climbing vine and is easily spotted by its 3-leaf configuration. It is common in almost all of the areas Venture uses for its workshops. A person can come into contact with the irritating chemical either through direct contact with the plant, with oil from the plant that is on clothes, or gear, or through inhalation of smoke from a burning plant.
  - Signs and Symptoms: Local itching, burning, redness, and small blisters, appearing anywhere from a few hours to 5 days after contact depending on person.
  - Treatment:
    - For direct contact: Wash the affected area immediately (or as soon as possible) with soap and water. Octagon soap works best, but is not always available. Be sure to wash any clothing, which has come into contact with the plant, as well. If a rash develops, Calamine lotion helps to relieve itching. The area of rash should be kept as clean as possible, and if blisters break they should be treated as an open wound. Severe dermatitis, with large blisters and local swelling may remain for several days and may require medical attention.
    - For smoke inhalation or severe reactions: Seek medical attention as soon as possible.
- Snake Bites: (See page 76 of the red WMA Field Guide) A poisonous snakebite requires medical attention. A snakebite victim should be taken to a hospital as quickly and gently as possible. If staff is certain that the snake is non-poisonous, treat the bite as a puncture wound. Otherwise follow procedures for a poisonous bite. Many bites by poisonous snakes (20%) produce no envenomation.
  - Signs and Symptoms of Pit Viper Bites (Rattlesnakes, Copperheads, and Cottonmouths): Immediately following a pit viper bite, the patient experiences burning at the site. Inspection reveals two bite marks 3/16 to 1 1/2 inches apart. Local swelling occurs within five minutes and slowly progresses proximally to involve the entire extremity. Bruising and blood-filled blisters frequently accompany the swelling. In severe cases, systemic signs and symptoms develop, including nausea, vomiting, sweating, weakness, generalized bleeding, and tingling of the scalp, face, and lips. Damage to blood vessels may cause hypovolemic shock (decrease in circulating blood volume) and pulmonary edema.
  - Treatment of Pit Viper Bites:
    - Plan for immediate evacuation; helicopter evacuation may be necessary in a remote environment
    - Place the patient in position of comfort. Avoid movement as much as possible.
    - Remove all watches, rings, and bracelets from the involved extremity before swelling occurs.
    - Wash the wound carefully with soap and water, blot with gauze, and apply a dressing.
    - Be alert for any signs of shock; treat as necessary. Keep victim calm and comfortable; maintain body temperature.
  - Signs and Symptoms of Coral Snake Bites: Coral snake bites usually involve much less local burning than pit viper bites. The bites themselves are often difficult to see. Local
swelling, blistering, and bruising usually are minimal. Within an hour or so, the effects of the venom on the nervous system begin to develop. First the bitten extremity becomes numb and weak. Later, central nervous system symptoms such as dizziness, impaired consciousness, nervousness, involuntary movements, and drooling, and increased salivation occur. These symptoms are followed within several hours by difficulty in talking and swallowing, double vision, and, in untreated cases, death due to cardiac arrest and respiratory failure.

- Treatment of Coral Snake Bites: Though rare, coral snake bites are extremely serious and can cause death within four hours if untreated. Therefore, time is of the essence in getting the victim to medical attention. Treat the bite as you would a pit viper bite.

- Tick Bite Diseases. Microorganisms transmitted by tick bites may cause a variety of infectious conditions. The incubation period can be from 3-12 days between the bite and the first symptoms, which include weakness, chills, nausea, headaches, fever, and pain (which is often localized in the eyes, back or large joints). These diseases are usually seasonal: Ticks are most prolific in June and July, but they are active between April and September, and cases of tick-borne diseases have been diagnosed year round.

  - Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever: This is carried by the common dog tick and is the best known type of disease spread by ticks. Measles-like spots that can be seen but not felt may develop from 2-7 days after the onset of a fever. High fever with a rash is the classical symptom. Other common symptoms include hike spiking fever, severe headache, muscle aches, weakness and rash beginning on extremities and spreading to trunk.

  - Lyme Disease: The pinhead-sized deer tick carries this disease. The deer tick is usually much harder to locate on the body than the dog or wood tick; consequently, most people do not even know they’ve been bitten until the first symptoms appear. The signs and symptoms are a ring-type or “bulls-eye” rash (which grows slowly and can be 3” across after 2 weeks) around the bite (which sometimes goes unnoticed), accompanied or followed by the following flu-like symptoms: fever, muscle and joint pains, headache, and stiff neck. In more advance stages, the person may develop arthritis-like symptoms (pain and swelling in one or more joints).

  - Treatment: Both of these diseases require professional medical attention and are treated by antibiotics. Caution participants to be alert for the onset of any of the above symptoms once they return home. If they do develop symptoms, they should notify their doctors of these symptoms (and their probable cause) as soon as possible.

  - Removing Ticks in the Field: Daily checks for ticks should be made during the active season (April to October). Ticks do not usually bite immediately after landing; instead, they move to warm (often hairy) places on the body. The recommended method for removal is to pull them gently and steadily with tweezers or fingers as close to the surface of the skin as possible, paying careful attention to the head of the tick, after which you should wash and disinfect the area. After removing the tick, make sure the entire head is removed.

- Hypothermia: (see the red WMA Field Guide p. 61-63).

  - Definition: Hypothermia is a decrease in the body core temperature to a point where normal muscular and cerebral functions are impaired

  - Prevention:
    - Be aware (and make participants aware) of the causes of and contributors to hypothermia (loss of body heat through conduction, convection, radiation, and evaporation; being tired, hungry, dehydrated, and improperly clothed).
    - Be alert to weather changes and make sure participants are regulating their body temperature well (adding clothes or venting as necessary). Check for hats and
gloves and wool or synthetic clothing next to the skin (NO COTTON) in cool, wet, and/or windy conditions.

- Eat small amounts of food frequently (especially quick-burning carbohydrates) to prevent depletion of body energy reserves.
- Drink at least two quarts of water per day to prevent dehydration. Warm drinks are best; snow or cold water requires extra energy to bring them to body temperature.
- Be attentive to yourself and your group for initial signs and symptoms of hypothermia.

Signs and Symptoms of Hypothermia:
- Mild: 98.6-96° F. Normal to slightly impaired brain function; light to moderate shivering; loss of fine motor coordination. Person will appear fatigued or sluggish, poorly coordinated, and might have uncontrollable fits of shivering.
- Moderate: 96-90° F. Moderate to violent shivering; increased brain impairment; loss of gross motor coordination. Person will exhibit a stumbling, lurching gait, thickness of speech, and poor judgment. The “umbles,” mumbles, stumbles and bumbles
- Severe ("Metabolic Icebox") below 90° F. Shivering stops: exposed skin blue or puffy, muscle coordination very poor, with inability to walk. Person may be confused, incoherent, and may exhibit irrational behavior, but may be able to maintain posture and appearance of psychological contact.
- Below 80° F: Severe muscular rigidity, semi-consciousness, stupor, loss of psychological contact leading to unconsciousness; pulse and respiration slow, erratic or non-existent; pupils may dilate. Death occurs after failure of cardiac and respiratory centers

Treatment:
- If the person is conscious and shivering
  - Remove from immediate danger and further exposure.
  - Get the person dry and insulate with hypothermia wrap (make a human “burrito”. Spread plastic sheet 8’x8’ on ground, with ensolite pad and blankets or sleeping bags spread over entire surface, put person inside and wrap like a burrito. There should be 4” of insulation surrounding patient.
  - Give the person warm, sweet liquids.
  - You can place hot water bottles or heat packs, if available, in the groin area and under the armpits. (wrapped to protect from burning).
- If the person is unconscious or not shivering
  - Treat very gently: cut away wet clothes.
  - Hypothermia wrap and evacuate. (see pages 61-63 of the red WMA Field Guide)
  - You can place hot water bottles in the hypo wrap near the feet, but do not place them in direct contact with the body.
- Acute Hypothermia:
  - Shell Hypothermia: The rapid cooling of extremities leading to extreme un-coordination.
  - Cold Water Immersion: Victim can go into cardiac arrest upon immersion of face.
  - Cold Water Submersion: The combination of acute hypothermia with asphyxiation.
• Treatment: If victim is conscious, get him/her dry and in a hypothermia wrap.
  If the victim is not breathing, administer CPR per wilderness protocols

• Heat Cramps:
  o People who exercise in hot weather often experience heat cramps. They are caused by the replacement of water without replacing salt lost through sweating.
  o Prevention: Drink beverages containing electrolytes at regular intervals during strenuous exercise.
  o Treatment:
    - Rest in a cool place.
    - Massage the muscle and stretch it in the opposite direction (lengthen it).
    - Replace salts with food and electrolyte replacement fluid diluted 10:1 with water.

• Heat Exhaustion: (see page 66-67 of the red WMA Field Guide)
  o Heat exhaustion usually occurs in persons who are not acclimatized to heat and is the combination of salt and water loss secondary to sweating. It may be associated with heat cramps. With proper treatment, the person will recover within 12 hours. Heat exhaustion is not a life-threatening emergency.
  o Signs and Symptoms (similar to shock): Pulse is slightly increased; respiration is slightly increased; skin is pale, cool, and clammy; the victim may complain of dizziness, nausea, and may experience vomiting. Blood pressure is normal.
  o Treatment:
    - Have victim rest in a cool place.
    - Replace lost body fluids and salt with 1 tsp. salt in 1 qt. water.

• Heat Stroke: (see page 66-67 of the red WMA Field Guide)
  o Heat stroke is caused by the failure of the body to cool itself adequately. The person has "oversweat." As the sweating mechanism fails, the body temperature will rise rapidly. Heat stroke is a life-threatening emergency.
  o Prevention:
    - Keep the head covered with a sun hat.
    - Rest often in extreme heat and bright sun.
    - Drink plenty of fluids.
  o Signs and Symptoms:
    - The skin is red, hot, and dry (50% of victims are sweating, 50% are dry).
    - The person becomes disoriented, confused, combative, and hallucinatory. Eventually s/he will become unconscious, go into a coma, and die.
  o Treatment:
    - Remove the person from heat and sun.
    - Cool immediately by soaking with water and fanning to accelerate evaporation (but beware of shivering as it produces heat)
    - Evacuate to medical facilities ASAP.

• Sun Damage:
  o UVA causes deep burns, UVB causes superficial burns.
  o Factors increasing radiation: mid-day, nearer to equator, higher altitude, snow, wind (reduces perception), water (reduces skin reflection), clouds (reduces perception)
  o Factors affecting exposure: length of exposure, geographic location, and repetition of exposure, genetics and medications.
  o Treatment and prevention of sunburns
    - Prevention: Use sunscreens, sun blocks, and limit exposure. Clothes help but can be deceptive, as they do NOT provide protection from deep burning. Average
clothing has an SPF of 4. Therefore, wear sun blocks underneath clothes (i.e. act as if clothing layer isn't there). Or use clothing made especially for sun protection such as a hats

- Skin care: with cool soaks, compresses or topical creams. (examples include: Sarna, Prax lotion, Aveena, Eucerin) Creams are much better than lotions. Aloe & Solarcaine are not recommended as it sensitizes some people. If a person has a positive history with using Aloe, it is okay to use. Avoid salt-water soaks.
- Pain: control with Aspirin or Ibuprofen.
  - Potential consequences of serious sun exposure
    - Dehydration, rhabdomyolysis (muscles break down) renal (kidney) failure, Stevens- Johnson (skin disintegrates).
  - Phototoxicity
    - Signs that indicate the need to get a patient out of the field: Severe burns (i.e. with blisters or that decreases sensation) despite protection. Spontaneous skin cracking, loss of sensation, dizziness with severe burn, alternating hot and cold, of either skin or of core temperature.

Wilderness Protocols
(this section to be filled in upon renewed signature by physician)
Lightning
(partially adapted from the NCOBS Instructor Handbook, 1998, pp. 304-311)

Lightning is an extremely powerful and very unpredictable force. It can travel well in front of storms and can strike without warning. The best protection against lightning is not lightning drill but rather prevention; knowledge, awareness, and proper planning. In the warmer months in the Southeast, thunderstorms are fairly predictable in the afternoons. With this knowledge, trip staff should be advised to avoid being in exposed/high risk areas (see drawings) in the afternoon, or have contingency plans if they are planning to be exposed. Staff should be constantly attuned to the weather and weather patterns, and be ready to alter plans if thunder is imminent. The best practice is to be in a relatively good space (a grove of evenly spaced, evenly tall trees) during a storm; don’t cause poor planning to necessitate a lightning drill in a high risk area.

There is some disagreement in the outdoor community as to whether lightning drill should be done overnight. There are risks associated with having the group all in one space, but there are also risks involved in spreading out in dark, inclement weather. Instructors must use their best judgment as to whether to get a group out of their tents in the event of an overnight thunderstorm. Generally, Venture advises that if the campsite is in a “good” space (down in elevation, in a grove of evenly spaced, evenly tall trees), to stay in tents and prevent issues such as hypothermia. If camping in a high risk area, lightning drill is generally advised. Either way, instructors must take many factors into account when making the call.

Distance in miles, of electrical storms may be calculated by timing the interval between the flash and the following thunder and dividing this number by 5 (5 sec. = 1 mi.).

**Lightning policy:** When the interval between lightning and thunder is less than 15 seconds, staff and participants must seek an appropriate location and prepare for a lightning drill. By the 10-second interval, staff and participants will be in the drill position and will remain in position until the interval is greater than 10 seconds. This policy may be altered in the event of an overnight storm, as detailed above.

In a Lightning Drill each individual should:

- Separate from one another, by approximately 30 feet, but remain in visual and auditory contact with an Instructor.
- Seek the ideal position relative to the immediate surroundings (see illustrations below)
- Minimize the potential for hypothermia by wearing appropriated raingear and insulating clothing.
- Sit/crouch (see drawing) on an ensolite pad (or other insulating layer, such as a backpack). Remain in this position until the time between the lightning and thunder is 10 seconds or greater.
- In the event of a hit, the survival of the victim (whose heart or breathing may have stopped) will depend on the prompt action of others. It is quite unlikely that a group of separated individuals will be simultaneously hit and rendered unconscious.

Managing Risk:

- When a storm is in the area, actively assess the route and activity in regard to the time needed to reach a relatively safe position. Move to an area where a timely escape is possible (i.e., begin retreat from summits or high exposed ridges; prepare to evacuate off ropes courses, paddle close to shore).
• Lightning is most likely to strike the highest object in any given area. Keep from being the highest object to avoid a direct strike and try to stay away from high objects to avoid splash injuries or step (ground) current. Avoid the following specific areas:
  o Summits, ridges, tops of cliffs.
  o Overhangs and shallow caves.
  o Ditches, gullies, and streams.
  o Tall trees, poles, large boulders, and high objects.
  o Open areas, fields, and meadows where you are the highest object around.

• Treatment for Lightning Strikes:
  o Electrical currents passing through the body may cause cardiac arrest, neurological damage or dysfunction (unconsciousness, seizures, temporary paralysis, amnesia, and confusion), and burns. First aid measures may include artificial respiration, CPR, and treatment for traumatic shock and burns.

• Background information:
  o Lightning is perhaps the most unpredictable, objective hazard encountered in the field. Venture’s program areas and activities often place participants and staff in areas where lightning is a serious potential hazard. It is, essential therefore, that we educate (and monitor) participants and ourselves in the danger of lightning and the precautions necessary to minimize risk.
  o An estimated 8 million lightning strikes occur each day on Earth. Approximately 400 lightning related fatalities occur in the United States every year. That is more than in any other natural disaster, including floods, earthquakes, blizzards, tornadoes, and hurricanes. The highest concentration of lightning injuries and fatalities occur in alpine and marine environments, and the majority of victims are individuals participating in outdoor recreation.
  o Dangers from Direct Hit: Lightning will take the easiest path to the ground. A direct hit normally strikes the tallest object in a particular area such as mountain summits, minor peaks or pinnacles, sharp ridges, trees or standing people.
  o Danger from Ground Current: The current in a lightning bolt does not dissipate at the point of the direct hit. The current will continue to travel along the easiest path(s) of electrical conduction on the earth’s surface. Likely paths may include wet lichen-covered
all patients are considered potentially infectious for HIV, HBV and other bloodborne pathogens when providing first aid or health care. Under universal precautions, blood and certain body fluids containing visible blood, semen and vaginal secretions. Universal precautions also apply to tissues and to the following fluids: cerebrospinal, synovial, pleural, peritoneal, pericardial and amniotic fluids. Universal precautions do not apply to feces, nasal secretions, sputum, sweat, tears, urine and vomitus unless they contain visible blood. Universal precautions do not apply to saliva except when visibly contaminated with blood or in the dental setting where blood contamination of saliva is predictable.

Universal precautions involve the use of protective barriers such as gloves, gowns, aprons, masks or protective eyewear, which can reduce the risk of exposure of the health care worker’s
skin or mucous membranes to potentially infective materials. In addition, under universal precautions, it is recommended that all health care workers take precautions to prevent injuries caused by needles, scalpels and other sharp instruments or devices.

- Transmission of bloodborne pathogens: These are transmitted through the exchange of bodily fluids through sexual intercourse, sharing contaminated IV needles and syringes, blood and blood product transfusions and during pregnancy or breast feeding from an infected mother to an infant. In very rare cases, the virus has been passed when a non-infected person with an open sore or lesion has come into contact with an infected person's blood. However, the virus must enter the non-infected person's bloodstream in order for that person to become infected. They are **NOT** transmitted through casual contact such as sharing eating utensils, kissing, hugging, etc. Fluid exchange with someone infected does not guarantee that the other person will become infected.

**Local Operating Procedures (LOPs):**

- The assumption must be made that everyone is a potential carrier, and the following LOPs have been adapted to reduce the likelihood of transmission of bloodborne pathogens. Although the risk is very small, the type of transmission that seems most likely to occur on a Venture workshop would involve the exposure of open skin lesions or mucous membranes to the blood or other bodily fluids of an infected person.

- **Latex or other impermeable gloves must be worn while making contact with the non-intact skin of another person, especially where blood is involved.** Gloves must be removed and discarded after contact with the patient. Disposable articles contaminated with blood or other body fluids must be placed in a plastic bag that is impermeable and sturdy, then placed into a biohazard bag for storage and transportation back to campus.

- **Persons with open cuts or lesions on their hands must refrain from dressing an open wound for another person, regardless of whether they are wearing gloves.**

- **Hands and other skin surfaces must be washed with soap and water immediately after using gloves or if contact is made with the blood or non-intact skin of another person.**

- **Where possible, use the pocket mask provided in the first aid kits for mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.** When practicing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, participants and staff should avoid mouth-to-mouth contact. "Emergency workers who regularly give mouth to mouth resuscitation or CPR to victims may protect themselves from a variety of diseases by using a specially designed mouthpiece. However, the risk of infection is so slight that no one should hesitate to give emergency mouth-to-mouth resuscitation without a mouthpiece."

- **To prevent needle-stick injuries, do not bend, break, or otherwise manipulate a needle by hand.** After an epinephrine injector is used, it should be carefully replaced back into the Epi-Pen holder and placed in an empty nalgene bottle.

- **If a participant reports that s/he is HIV-positive or has other diseases during a program (or on medical history form), staff will keep this information confidential.**

- Participants and staff on Venture trips are expected to refrain from sexual contact that could result in the transmission of a disease or illness.

- **Participants and staff should refrain from sharing water bottles and eating utensils.** Although the risk of HIV transmission through the sharing of water bottles, etc. is extremely low, many other more common germs can easily be transmitted in this manner.

**Lost Persons**

Inform participants what to do if they become lost. This includes:

- **Three blasts on the whistle, rest, repeat.**

- **Don't panic. Stay calm. Stay right where you are. Help will come. It is best not to wander further.** Randomly moving only increases the size of the area where a search will need to take place. If,
Procedures to follow in locating a lost person:

- If a participant is missing, leaders should inquire of the other group members as to the person’s last whereabouts, the time last seen, direction the person was heading, and any information about where the participant was going in an attempt to reconstruct where the person might be.
- If more than 30 minutes have gone by since the person was last seen, or if there is reason for concern, initial action should begin. This consists of shouting the person’s name to attempt to get a response. This assumes the person is near by. It works best to have everyone shout together, either facing in a circle or all facing one direction and then repeating for other directions. Shout slowly and enunciate. i.e. “JOHN MAC DANIELS WHERE ARE YOU? Then listen.
- If shouting does not bring a response, group members in pairs should perform an organized Hasty Search by quickly searching the most likely areas (e.g. campsite, bathroom areas, nearby trails, lookout points, nearby streams or lakes). This search should be no longer than 20 to 30 minutes. Take time to plan where searchers will go on the Hasty Search. In particular look in any area that seems probable based on your earlier information gathering (i.e. the person was heading north out of camp, wanted to see the sun set, etc.) Look for signs of the person such as clothing or belongings. Have all the search teams shout for the person repeatedly. Listen carefully for a response.
- If the Hasty Search does not bring results, a more systematic Area Search should be initiated by teams (at least 3 people per team) covering nearby trails, roads, water areas, cliffs, etc. for a period of not more than 1 hour. Take time to plan where searchers will go on this second search to cover all likely areas before sending them out. Searchers should carry necessary equipment for the conditions, like flashlights, rain gear, maps, and compasses. Each team must stay together in a group of three. It usually makes sense to leave at least a few people at a central base camp for communicating with returning searchers, especially if one of the teams, with or without the lost person, needs some assistance.
- If the Area Search does not bring results within one hour from when it began, and once all the search teams have returned, it is usually appropriate to contact the VOCEC, who in turn can contact the local authorities (usually the Sheriff’s office, who coordinate searches). Remember to Fill out the Missing Person Report. If cell phone service is unavailable, send a party of three (with appropriate emergency supplies, medical history forms, and part of the First Aid Kit) to the nearest evacuation point, to find a phone and initiate a search. Remember the group does not move while the runners are away.
- If the person is found after the messenger team goes for help, a decision must be made whether to send out another messenger team to inform the authorities that the person was found and bring back the first team, or to just wait for the team and rescue personnel to arrive.
Evacuation Procedures

There are typically a number of different options as to when and how to conduct an evacuation. As the leader, you will need to make the best choice for the given situation. Primary things to consider usually include:

- **Timing:**
  - Do it soon, before patient or conditions get worse.
  - Wait and do it later allowing time for patient to improve, for darkness to pass or for more resources or reinforcements to arrive.

- **Resources:**
  - Do it with the resources of your party.
    - Have patients walk out under their own power.
    - Have patients walk out with some assistance. You might divide up a patient's pack contents and have one or two people serve as supports. Monitor the patient constantly.
    - Carry the patients out in a piggyback type carry.
    - Carry the patients out on a backboard or in a litter (either manufactured or improvised).
  - Wait for outside assistance to come into the field and assist you or take over the evacuation. This might also include waiting for specific equipment (backboard or IV) or for expertise (paramedic).

- **Other things to consider**
  - Make sure patient is as stable, comfortable (including emotionally) and secure as possible before starting.
  - Be attentive to the needs of others in the group.
  - Determine the best (shortest and easiest) overall route and use scouts to identify the best immediate paths to use.

- **If planning to wait for assistance, you must communicate this need for help,** either by using the cellular, or by sending out runners to a phone.
  - If using a cell phone, typically contact the VOCEC first, who will, in turn, contact the local Sheriff's Office and start the Venture emergency communication procedures. **If the patient is stable, it is worth taking the minute to first contact the VOCEC.**
  - If the situation merits quicker action (i.e. if the patient is not stable and/or there is a threat to the ABCs), leaders may choose to first call 911 (or the local sheriff's office), and **then call the VOCEC immediately afterwards**
  - If cell phone service is not available, **send a minimum of three people** to the nearest evacuation point to locate a phone and call the VOCEC (or sheriff, as appropriate). The group must have appropriate emergency supplies, medical history forms, and part of the First Aid Kit). The runners should take a copy of the SOAP note with them. Another copy should stay with the patient. The primary caregiver should stay with the patient. Remember **the group does not move while the runners are away.**

Helicopter Considerations
(Refer to WMA Field Guide)

- Don’t assume a helicopter will be able to come to rescue. The cost is high. Generally, if a helicopter seems appropriate, staff would contact the local authorities (sheriff’s office) and place a request through them. If a helicopter rescue is necessary, the field staff may choose to contact the authorities directly, rather than first contacting the VOCEC. If the authorities are contacted directly, the field staff **must then immediately contact the VOCEC.**

- Landing sites:
• Prepare patients:
  o Inform them of what is to happen.
  o Have them all ready to go so the helicopter doesn’t waste fuel waiting.
  o Protect the patient’s head, eyes and ears and secure arms if unconscious.
  o Have gear packed and ready to go.
  o Have no loose straps of gear that will fly around under rotor currents.
  o Attach the first aid record of patient’s injuries and treatments in an obvious but secure place.
• Interaction with helicopter:
  o As the helicopter approaches signal it in with mirror or smoke.
  o Mark wind with streamers of surveyor’s tape or nylon rain pants or mark by a person standing with arms extended toward landing site and back to the wind.
  o Wear eye protection from flying sand, etc.
  o If helicopter lowers a cable with anything (message, radio, litter) let it touch the ground to dissipate static electricity before grabbing it.
  o Stay 75’ away from helicopter as it lands. Approach only when signaled to by pilot or flight crew.
  o ALWAYS approach or leave the helicopter from the front half of the side so the pilot can see you at all times and to avoid the very dangerous rear rotor blade.
  o Approach and leave the helicopter from the downhill side and keep head low since the rotor dips lower when it is moving more slowly.
  o Always follow the directions of the pilot or crew.

**Emergency Communication Procedures**

The following are step-by-step procedures to be followed by trip staff in case of an injury or a death in connection with a Venture program. There are four levels of response. The flow chart on the next pages maps out the flow of information. Typically, as long as a patient is stable, it is recommended for field staff to contact the Venture On-Call Emergency Coordinator first and exclusively. The VOCEC will be in a place where he/she can make multiple phone calls, be reliably available by phone, have access to a phone charger, etc. In the field, you may have spotty reception or may only have sufficient battery life for a limited number of calls. The exception to the rule is if there is an imminent life threat and/or the patient is not stable (is in danger of losing basic ABC functions). In these extreme cases, contact emergency response directly and then immediately follow-up with the VOCEC to initiate the proper communications.

**Level 1: Minor problem, situation in hand**

• No outside assistance is needed—no need to visit advanced medical care nor need to call for outside assistance in performing an evacuation.
• Contact the Venture On-Call Emergency Coordinator (VOCEC) promptly upon return from the field. (The VOCEC will inform the Venture Director and Assistant Vice Chancellor/Director of Student Activities [AVC-DSA], as necessary)
• Typically, fill out an Accident/Incident Report Form (unless directed otherwise by the Assistant Director, Trip or the Venture Director)
• Consult with the Assistant Director and/or Venture Director re. any necessary follow-up
Level 2: Personal injury - outside assistance

- Outside assistance is needed—either in the form of advanced medical care or in the form of assistance for an evacuation. It is not anticipated, however, for the situation to require an overnight hospital stay or a prolonged hospital stay.
- Contact the Venture On-Call Emergency Coordinator (VOCEC) ASAP to coordinate the evacuation and/or put the emergency communication procedures in place. The VOCEC will inform the Venture Director, the AVC-DSA, UNC Charlotte police, and local land manager, if appropriate.
- As in this situation the patient is stable, it is recommended to first contact the VOCEC and rely on him/her to carry coordinate the rescue and contact all other parties.
- After the fact, fill out an accident/incident form.
- Consult with the Assistant Director and/or Venture Director re. any necessary follow-up

Level 3: Significant personal injury

- Outside assistance is needed—either in the form of advanced medical care or in the form of assistance in performing an evacuation. An overnight hospital stay may be anticipated, and/or a longer recovery may be anticipated. The patient is largely stable, though there may be some concern about continued stability.
- Field staff should use their best judgment regarding whether to first contact the VOCEC first or go to directly to 911 or sheriff’s office. Use the patient’s stability as a guideline—VOCEC first if stable, 911 first it now. Once contacted, the VOCEC will (as necessary) coordinate the evacuation, and alert the Venture Director, AVC-SDA, UNC Charlotte police, and local manager.
- After the fact, fill out an accident/incident form.
- Consult with the Assistant Director and/or Venture Director re. any necessary follow-up

Level 4: Death or life threatening injury or potential long term disability

- Patient is deceased or is unstable, with immediate or imminent threats to ABC.
- Do not hesitate to call 911/sheriff’s office and start emergency response. Then immediately contact the VOCEC. VOCEC will contact the Venture Director, AVC-SDA, UNC Charlotte police, and local land manager. VOCEC, Venture Director, and UNCC Police dispatch will begin contacting those on the flow sheet.
- After the fact, fill out an accident/incident form.
- Consult with the Assistant Director and/or Venture Director re. any necessary follow-up

No one with the exception of the Director of Public Relations should make statements to the press. All others should refer inquiries to the Director of Public Relations.

All steps taken after the accident need to be recorded for further reference. It is vital that information is passed promptly, accurately, and completely at each communication link.

If there is any problem reaching the VOCEC, field staff may directly contact UNC Charlotte Police and/or the Venture Director.

If the accident happens on campus, campus police should be contacted, and they should contact a rescue squad (EMS) if one is needed. If the injured party is a UNC Charlotte student, they should be taken to the Student Health Center unless a more extensive emergency care facility is needed. On the following page is a diagram of the chain of communication in the event of such serious injury or death.
COMMUNICATION IN EVENT OF SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH

SEE attached Phone List FOR A LIST OF CURRENT HOME AND BUSINESS TELEPHONE NUMBERS FOR OFFICIALS INDICATED

Venture Field Staff

I. Designated Venture “On-call Emergency Coordinator” – VOCCE (per Venture Trip Report) either Venture Director, Associate Director, or an Assistant Director.

II. Local Law Enforcement and Emergency Medical Officials appropriate to accident site

(Police and VOCCE will communicate with each other.)

II. UNCC Police & Public Safety

II. local Land Manager

III. Public Relations

III. Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

IV. University Attorney

IV. Associate Vice Chancellor for Risk Management, Safety & Security

1. AG Tort Claims *
2. Counsel to President *
3. University Business Manager*

I. Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Activities, Diversity and Special Projects

II. Dean of Students

If Level II Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

*Chancellor

*Trustees

For an on-campus student – contact Office of Housing and Residence Life as appropriate.

Level 1: minor problem, situation in hand - contact I’s only (within 24 hours of return to campus)
Level 2: personal injury – EMS involved and/or itinerary changed – contact I’s and II’s ASAP
Level 3: significant personal injury – overnight stay at medical facility – contact I’s and II’s ASAP
Level 4: death or life threatening injury or potential long term disability – contact all ASAP

*Officials indicated by asterisk will ordinarily not be notified unless there has been a death, severe injury, or injury to several persons.
Responsibilities and Guidelines for Different Staff

Let the following guide all communications (borrowed from Ajango’s Lessons Learned II: Using Case Studies to Improve Safety Education, Safety Ed. Eagle River, AK.

• Identify Core Values: there is a potential conflict between protecting the organization from financial harm versus caring for the injured.
• Show you Care: There is a need not just to make statements of sympathy and remorse but to actively reach out for as long as appropriate.
• Accident Response when someone is to Blame: there is a potential conflict in apologizing when possibility exists for litigation.
• Understand Why People Get Angry: withholding information, refusing to accept responsibility for one’s own role in an accident, not having in place the right things to prevent an accident, the perception that incomplete or inaccurate information is provided, and when profits/money seems to be placed ahead of public interest. There is the perception that organizations have a “responsibility to help the injured, to figure out what went wrong and to makes sure a similar crisis does not happen again.”
• Public Relations versus Legal Advice: potential conflict in these two approaches to public disclosure. “Is it better to risk potential financial damages in the court of law or long-term reputation and credibility damages in the court of public opinion?”
• Be Willing To Change Course: if public opinion is souring, the organization should reevaluate its strategy.

It is recommended that any serious accident involving long-term disability or death, that an external incident review be conducted by recognized experts in the adventure education field as soon as reasonable following the incident.

UNC Charlotte Police and Public Safety

Upon receiving a call from Venture field staff or Venture On-Call Emergency Coordinator involving a serious injury or death, the Police and Public Safety personnel will:

• Start a log of all calls and activities.
• Get the following information from the caller:
  o Name of caller and of victim
  o Brief description of the accident and injuries or emergency situation
  o Location of caller - street, town, USGS map quadrants
  o Location of accident.
  o Phone number where the caller is
  o Has rescue squad, local sheriff been called?
• If the accident is on campus:
  o Start regular accident procedures
  o Determine where the accident occurred
  o Inform Venture office of the situation
• If the accident if off campus:
  o Determine the level of the situation.
    ▪ Level 1: minor problem, situation in hand.
    ▪ Level 2: personal injury either requiring assistance from EMS or rescue squad, possible treatment at hospital (as outpatient) or itinerary changed due to incident
    ▪ Level 3: significant personal injury – overnight at medical facility is necessary – may or may not require assistance from rescue personnel to evacuate patient.
- Level 4: death or life threatening injury or potential long term disability.
  - For Level 3 or 4 - Instruct the caller to stay at the phone (and if it is a cell phone to keep the phone turned on) until rescue squad or sheriff arrives if they will need to be escorted to the accident site. If additional support may be needed, instruct the caller to either return to the trailhead or the location of the phone after leading the rescue squad in or to leave a detailed map or instructions on the location of the group and injured at a specified location such as the trail head.
  - For any Level – determine if Venture On-call Emergency Coordinator has been contacted by the field staff, and if not contact this person designated for this trip on the Trip Report, or call the Venture Director. If unavailable, call the Venture Associate Director and Venture Assistant Directors until you reach some Venture staff. See attachment for phone numbers.
  - For Level 2, 3 or 4 - If the sheriff has not been notified, call the local sheriff; give phone number and location of the caller. **DO NOT SPECULATE AS TO CAUSE OF ACCIDENT.** Let the sheriff contact the caller. Also if the field staff have not reached the local land manager, then call this person who should be listed on the Venture Trip Report that was submitted to Dispatch for that trip.
  - For Level 3 or 4 - call the Public Relations Director – if unavailable call the Media Relations Manager. See attachment for phone numbers. **DO NOT MAKE ANY STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS, REFER INQUIRIES TO THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AND RECORD ALL CALLS AND ACTIVITY**
  - For Level 4, contact **all** the names on the Police line in the flow chart; Venture On-Call Emergency Coordinator, Public Relations Director, Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs, University Attorney and Associate Vice Chancellor for Risk Management, Safety and Security.

**Venture On-Call Emergency Coordinator and Venture Director**

The Venture On-call Emergency Coordinator will:
- Get all details from Campus Police or Venture field staff
  - Names of caller and any victims.
  - Brief description of the accident, injuries, or emergency.
  - Location of caller (street, town, location on map).
  - Location of accident or emergency.
  - Phone number where the caller is.
  - Has the field staff contacted the rescue squad, local law enforcement, as appropriate?
  - Has the field staff released any information to the media? If so, what information was released?
  - Name of hospital where patient has been or will be moved to.
- If initial call was from Campus Police, call Venture field staff to determine needs of the field staff.
- Contact other Venture core staff if their support would be beneficial.
- Call the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Activities, and the Dean of Students (unless the Asst.VC for Student Activities agrees to do this) to share initial information about the incident. As possible, divide up responsibilities among Venture core staff for staying in touch with field situation and contacting the key players in Student Affairs. One Venture professional staff should serve as the liaison between the field situation and the on campus incident commander.
- As needed: arrange for a Venture core staff member to proceed to the field to provide support for staff and participants and to secure field situation.
- Document all activities.
- Keep the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Activities, and the Dean of Students informed of
updates in the field situation.

• Get written statements from staff and participants as soon as possible.

Other items to be considered are:

• Reassess planned activities for the program and adjust if necessary to avoid subjecting participants and staff to unwarranted stress. Plan for creative ways to proceed. Terminate the course only as a last resort given a positive alternative is almost always possible.

• Assess physical and emotional needs of participants and staff. Arrange for someone from the university (preferably a Venture professional staff) to go to the scene immediately to attend to this and also to facilitate reporting and documentation.

• Make certain all affected legal and land management authorities are notified.

• In the event of a fatality, wait for legal authorization (usually the local sheriff) before moving the body. Arrange for photographs in situ before the body is moved.

• Secure names, addresses and phone numbers of witnesses and names of local authorities that are investigating.

• Arrange for photos to be taken of the accident scene as soon as possible.

Contacting the listed Emergency Contact.

• It may be appropriate to inform the listed emergency contact of significant injuries, or if the injured party will be spending some time in the hospital. Please see section below for details.

Follow Up

• In less serious cases (where there is no death or major injury) and as appropriate, the Venture Director should contact the affected participant(s) once the trip has returned to Charlotte, to see how they are doing and to get their reflections on the incident and the treatment they have received. It may be appropriate to continue to check in over a course of days or weeks until the medical situation is resolved or stabilized.

• In more serious cases, regarding contacting affected participants or their families, the Venture Director should work closely with the Dean of Students to avoid extraneous or uncoordinated efforts in this regard.

• In consultation with Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Activities, the Dean of Students and others involved, the Venture Director should consider what information to provide to the staff and participants who were on the trip/adventure with the injured party, as well as to all Venture employees. Consider offering CISD – Critical Incident Stress Debriefing for staff and possibly the entire group that was present at the accident.

Compiling records.

• In the event of a serious injury or fatality, the Venture Director should compile and preserve all relevant paperwork including consent forms, waivers, medical history forms, equipment lists, and program descriptions that were disseminated or signed by the participants.

• Locate and preserve records of equipment purchase, maintenance and condition of any relevant equipment.

• Compile and document information on the training regimen used to educate participants and staff.

• Compile and document information on instructor’s background and credentials.

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Assistant Vice Chancellor for Students Activities & Director of Student Activities

Communications Log

• Begin and maintain a log of all communications and actions
On-Site Information

- Obtain the following information from the Venture On-call Emergency Coordinator:
  - Names of caller (on trip) and any victims.
  - Brief description of the accident, injuries, or emergency.
  - Location of caller (street, town, location on map).
  - Location of accident or emergency.
  - Phone number where the caller is.
  - Has the field staff contacted the rescue squad, local law enforcement, as appropriate?
  - Has the field staff released any information to the media? If so, what information was released?
  - Name of hospital where patient has been or will be moved to.

Contact the Dean of Students and Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs to inform them and confer on the following:

- Make a decision regarding the scope of the situation and the response needed. It is probably best to do this in consultation with the senior available Venture Staff. See different levels indicated on Flow Sheet.
- Consider having a staff member who has firsthand knowledge of the accident make a follow-up call to the family after they have been notified by designated University personnel. The initial university contact to a student’s family will be a staff from the Dean of Students Office. The initial contact to an employee’s family will likely be their supervisor.
- Consider having a university representative visit the family at their home (Normal advance travel clearances must be obtained).
- Arrange for others (trustees, other staff, advisory committee, or Venture Director) to reinforce the initial communications as it is helpful for the family to have support or information from a source besides the Dean of Students. For university employees, it may be appropriate to involve the individual’s supervisor in this contact with the family. Avoid extraneous or uncoordinated efforts in this regard.
- Consider contacting parents of other students on the trip roster in Venture Office file.
- Stay in touch with the Director of Public Relations, University Attorney, the Insurance Representative, and the next of kin of the victim.
- As appropriate consider initiating the Campus Emergency Response Plan (http://bcp.uncc.edu/ - (found at bottom of left navigation column for Emergency Response Plan and Tab C for Contact Matrix).
- If not part of point g: Contact the Counseling Center to provide critical incident stress debriefing services to program staff and to participants.

Implement Documentation Procedures:

- Make certain that written accounts are obtained as soon as possible from all witnesses and affected students and staff.
- Prepare a detailed factual report within 7 days, including preliminary recommendations without any judgments, conjecture, analysis, or conclusions.
- Submit the report to legal counsel for review and revision.
- After review of report by the Venture Director and the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Activities, decide:
  - The distribution and dissemination of the reports.
  - The need, if any, for further in-house or outside review or investigation and the specific tasks of any review body established.
- Review plans and activities scheduled for administrative personnel and adjust priorities.
Contacting the listed Emergency Contact and/or Family

In any death occurring off campus, it is the responsibility of the local police agency or hospital involved to notify the next of kin. Follow-up contact with families by the university will be coordinated through the appropriate University staff as outlined in Policy Statement #80 and PIM #55.

In case of a death or serious injury that may impact the student’s ability to complete his/her academic program for the current or future semester) there are a number of details that will need attention. For specific information regarding the death of a student, please refer to UNC Charlotte Policy Statement #80 Death of a Student, which can be found online at http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-80.html. In the case of a death, contact with the family is coordinated by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. For students living on campus, Housing and Residence Life should be contacted so they can notify roommates, etc.

In the case of significant injuries, it is also important that the victim’s emergency contact be informed as soon as reasonable. The Venture Staff (in coordination with the Dean of Students Office) will likely conduct the University’s contact. The Dean of Students Office can be a good resource in offering the family additional information and support. In instances of serious injury which impacts a student’s ability to continue his/her academics, the Dean of Students Office can request academic accommodations for the student, or to assist the student in pursuing a medical withdrawal from the University.

For specific information regarding the death of a University employee, please refer to UNC Charlotte Personnel Information Memorandum (PIM) #55 Procedures for Responding to the Death of University Employee, which can be found online at http://www.hr.uncc.edu/Policies/PIM55.htm. In such instances where the death involves a University employee, contact with the victim’s family is made in conjunction with the individual’s supervisor in coordination with the Vice Chancellor of the employee’s Division and the Public Relations Office. This information is outlined in PIM #55 under the “Notification Guide” section.

Director of Public Relations

Restrictions:

• No one, including the spokesman, will release any information that identifies responsibility for an accident without first consulting legal counsel.

• Specified problems arise when:
  o Assessment of fault or criticism of conduct, school policy, or equipment is made public without a full explanation of the circumstances of the accident developed through a complete Venture investigatory process.
  o A licensed medical physician releases information regarding the nature of the injury or illness prior to diagnosis.
  o Names of victims are revealed prior to notification of next-of-kin.
  o Estimates of property damage are released.

The following are a general guide:

• Stay in touch with the Asst. Vice Chancellor for Student Activities.
• After consultation with the University Attorney and Student Activities prepare a statement for the press.
• Communicate the statement (after clearance from the Asst. Vice Chancellor for Student Activities and legal counsel) to the wire services, A.P. and U.P.I.
The following comments are offered as a **general guide** in dealing with the news media:

- You will find the media cooperative if you deal with them in a straightforward manner and with facts, subject only to legal constraints, consideration for next-of-kin, protection of the injured and good taste.
- Hesitantly or improperly dealing with the press in an emergency situation may not only escalate their news coverage, but also in the long run can be critically costly to the university and take a great deal longer to remedy.
- From a public relations point of view, the objective is to have a one-day story and to avoid a continuing series of headlines and features dragged out over a period of days or weeks. To this end, we should provide the news media with as much detail as possible as early as possible.
- Most dealings with the news media will take place over the phone. Rather than reading a "canned story" to the caller, the spokesman should have a written list of key points for reference, and tell the story in his own words.
- The image projected by the spokesman of concern and caring may have an important effect of the eventual tone of the story that appears. It is important to impress on the media any kind of humanitarian or thoughtful acts taken by the university (e.g. Director visiting family).

**What the Press Will Want to Know** (See Restrictions): WHO was involved: names and personal data of injured and who was in charge, (and later who were the rescuers), WHAT exactly happened, WHEN did it happen, WHERE did it happen, WHY did it happen. Also, BACKGROUND on Venture, the University, Venture’s safety records, etc. Specifically, the spokesman will:

- Provide accurate and full disclosure of the facts and cooperate to every extent possible with the news media.
- When information cannot be released, explain why (e.g., next-of-kin have not yet been notified; doctor’s orders prohibit interview of survivor, medical records can not be made public without consent, etc.).
- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Withholding the NAMES of victims pending notification of next-of-kin is appropriate and will be respected by the press. However, we should not deny that the accident itself occurred.
- Refrain from speculation, and when the answer to a query is not known, so state. Statements should be avoided that that find fault, assess blame or criticize the conduct, policies or equipment of any party involved until the incident has been fully investigated. It is appropriate to indicate that the accident is under investigation.
- Provide the media with background material on Venture’s safety policies and safety record if appropriate.
- Make certain all media and all reporters have equal access to information.
- Upon discovering that erroneous information has been given to the media, provide correct information as soon as possible.
- When reporters print or broadcasts erroneous information, inform the reporter (not a supervisor) and provide the correct information.
- When given conflicting information by different sources, confirm which version is accurate before releasing it.
- Keep the appropriate offices informed of any developments, which might involve liability or reflect adversely on the university.