

CMC Trip and Trail Etiquette and Related Suggestions

remonsma@gmail.com 7.24

Signing up when “that hike is full”: Although many hikes on the calendar say “full” sign up anyway because waitlists almost always clear. To help yourself, ask the office to add you as a member of all sections you are interested in. Some sections send emails at a regular time per month to their members and that’s when their trips open; calendar yourself for when that newsletter is due to arrive. Also, sign up at your profile for instant notice when a new trip is posted at the CMC calendar, narrowing the notices to only the type you are interested in seeing.

On-Trail

1. Stay together on trails, at least within sight of each other. If the group is naturally breaking into sub-groups by speed, be sure the trip leader knows about it. They may slow down the pace altogether or decide to formally split the group, if there is another trip leader or experienced member on the trip who can lead one of the groups.
2. Never, ever leave the group without a discussion with the trip leader or designated sweep. They may assume you are missing in the wilderness and call for Mountain Rescue! If your issue can be accommodated, they will try to do so. The trip leader will ask you to sign yourself off the trip in writing if you insist on separating from the group.
3. Be prepared to “bio-break” in the woods or behind a rock, etc. Usually, the sexes separate into groups. If you need to go, say something, because others are probably thinking that too! Do not under-hydrate to keep from needing to pee because you may sicken with dehydration and cause the group to stop anyway.
4. Bring a small spade in case you need to bury “#2.” Bring enough tissue and a sealable bag to pack the tissue out. Do NOT bury toilet paper, as animals will dig it up no matter how deeply you bury it. Nothing is worse than finding someone else’s toilet paper along the trail!
5. Every trip is different but try to avoid loud or long conversations on the trail. You may want to get to know someone, and a bit of conversation is fine. But loud or excessive chattiness is a no-no. Others may be too polite to ask you to stop, but that doesn’t mean they are enjoying the conversation. Further, studies have shown that human noise can disturb wildlife even a quarter-mile away from the trail.

Off-Trail: Preparation

6. Make sure your personal first aid kit is up to date and packed appropriately. If you are hurt, it is YOUR first aid kit that should be used first. Take Wilderness First Aid to learn more. Free to Trip Leaders.
7. Do not make plans for end-of-the-day without a HUGE fudge factor. If you have “return time” concerns, talk to the leader before you commit. “Things happen” under the best of circumstances.
8. Carry extra water and calorie-dense snack foods way beyond what you think you may need. Until you have built up your experience, it’s common to under-estimate time and needs on the trail. If you start to “bonk,” drink water and eat a snack immediately. Many hikers also regularly snack on Salt Sticks, Clif Bloks, Espresso Beans, etc., especially in hot weather.
9. If taking more than a casual morning hike, put your dog in day care for the day, or have a back-up buddy to walk them. Worrying about returning in time to let a pet outside will ruin your day.

10. Read the entire trip description including Leader Notes and Required Equipment when you first sign up for a trip. Most questions will be answered there. If unsure, look at the [CMC trip rating definitions](#).
11. If you have never been to a particular meeting place, check the directions ahead of time to know how long it might take you to get there, considering the time of day.
12. Plug the leader's cell phone number into your phone before you leave home. If you are running late to the meet-up spot, call or text the leader with an approximate arrival time.
13. Trip "meeting time" usually means "drive-away time" unless the trip information distinguishes between the two. If you show up just five minutes late, you may be left behind. This is accepted CMC practice. The Trip Leader sets the meeting time with an eye toward expected weather, rush hours, length of the trip, sunrise/sunset times, etc. If you tend to be a perpetually late person, schedule yourself to arrive at least 15 minutes early.
14. If you decide to cancel off the trip roster, cancel yourself out ASAP so those on the waitlist may be notified to take your place. If within a few days of the trip, ALSO call or write the trip leader.
15. If you wake up sick or otherwise change your mind the morning of the hike, call *and* text the trip leader. "No show" without a good explanation will generate an automatic "tsk-tsk" email to you and may provoke the leader to keep you off their future rosters.
16. Pack for your trip the night before, using the [10 essentials checklist](#) plus the leader's trip equipment list (click the "Equipment" button at the bottom of the trip details to see it). Anything you want to leave until the last minute, like lunch, be sure to have a note to yourself by your pack. The more you hike, the easier, faster, and more automatic it will be to do this.
17. Many of these tips plus additional advice can be learned at either CMC [Wilderness Trekking School](#) or at [Day Hiker School \(hybrid WTS\)](#). One of these schools may be a prerequisite for additional CMC activities, like climbing, mountaineering, or scrambling. Also necessary for becoming a trip leader or assistant instructor. Even if you have no such ambitions, these classes will provide you with the "CMC etiquette" you'll want to feel completely comfortable on a CMC trip.

Off-Trail: Carpooling

18. Ride in carpools with people you don't know! The more CMC members you get to know, the more "at home" you will feel in the Club. It's nice to show up for a trip and see people you know from prior trips.
19. The trip leader often estimates RT mileage and sets a suggested reimbursement. Bring small bills to pay your carpool driver. Making change is clumsy and may be impossible. EV drivers are entitled to the same reimbursement as gas-powered drivers. Ask if you want to use Venmo, ApplePay, or another instant pay service. But know that not all members have adopted these services yet.
20. Always bring a change of footwear and a bag for your dirty boots, as a courtesy to your carpool driver. Some don't care but it's polite to be prepared and to ask. Be sure wet boots, microspikes, and snowshoes are at the bottom of the trunk equipment pile, because they likely will be draining on the way back to the meet place. Be sure water-carry systems are closed tight.
21. Although some carpool bathroom stops are at public places, like a town visitor center, stopping at a mid-way gas station is more common. Experienced trip leaders know about the best places in terms of cleanliness and amenities. This means CMC visits that place regularly to use its free facilities. It is only common courtesy for at least some of the trip members to purchase something such as an after-hike energy drink, coffee, fruit, trail bar, etc.