

Administrative Aspects of Leading Hikes with the AMC Southeastern Mass. Chapter Hiking Committee

While most of this is covered at SEM Leader Training Workshops and/or in the [AMC Leader Handbook](#), and the recently updated [AMC Leadership Requirements and Guidelines](#), this document attempts to put the information and appropriate hyperlinks all together in one place.

1) Planning and Listing SEM Hikes on the AMC trip listing system

Once recognized as an SEM Hiking Committee leader, the Chapter Chair will provide that leader with permission to generate trip listings for the [AMC online trip listing system \(OLTL\)](#). While this is a little intimidating at first, it's not so bad once you get the hang of it. Here's the link to the [online guide](#).

After you enter the trip into the system, the system forward your submission to the Hiking Committee Chair or Vice Chair for review and if it looks ok to him/her, he/she will forward it to the SEM Chapter Chair or Chapter Vice Chair for final approval, after which it will "go live" on the system. Please note that once a trip listing has been posted on the online system, it is very difficult to make modifications. This often involves having to first cancel the trip and then submitting a new listing for review and approval all over again. When you initially list the trip, the system will indicate its status as "Open." Should you have to cancel the hike or if it fills up, you should go back online and change the status to either "Cancelled" or "Wait Listed."

Also note that, particularly for new hike leaders, it's a very good idea to participate in the Hiking Committee's quarterly hike planning meetings where we all throw out proposed hikes and dates and try to fit them into an overall hiking schedule that offers "something for everyone," with minimum scheduling conflicts. The quarterly planning meetings also provide a great opportunity for leaders and potential co-leaders to connect. We try to arrange for at least one of these quarterly meetings to be a face-to-face meeting (rather than a tele-conference), sometimes in a more-or-less centrally located restaurant or other venue.

The planning meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month in March, June, September, and December.

2) Screening and registering hike participants

For hikes requiring pre-registration (as opposed to "show and go" hikes), the designated registrar for that hike (could be either the leader or one of the co-leaders) screens potential participants via either email, telephone, casual discussions with other leaders, or a combination of all three.

Although probably a bit overkill for easier hikes, here's a handy [checklist](#) you can use to help you perform this screening. However, for most hikes, you can usually screen potential candidates by just asking them a few simple questions, such as: "Have you hiked with the AMC before?" "What hikes they have done recently?" (rather than at some undetermined point in the past...), and "What is your general physical condition?" It's also often a good idea to ask if the candidate has basic equipment such as appropriate (non-cotton) hiking duds, rain gear, well-broken in hiking boots, and good wool hiking socks.

Based on their answers to these basic questions, you can usually determine whether or not you need to delve deeper into their recent experience, skill level, physical condition, or equipment.

If the registrar (possibly after conferring with other leaders/co-leaders) determines that the individual being screened is not up for this particular hike, he/she should recommend one or more alternate hikes that may be more appropriate for the individual's experience/fitness/capability level (and thus more enjoyable). Please always remember to be polite and respectful.

If you still have openings for the hike a week or two in advance, you have the option of posting it on the SEM [Short Notice Email List \(SNEL\) System](#) to stimulate additional interest.

3) Preparing the “poop sheet”

A week or two prior to the date of the scheduled hike, the trip leader (or designated co-leader under the leader's supervision) prepares and sends a comprehensive information ("poop") sheet to all registered participants. The poop sheet should include contact information for the leaders, a brief description of the hike, meeting time and location (with detailed directions to the trailhead), carpooling suggestions, and a checklist of what to wear and bring. You can find a [template and sample poop sheet](#) on our website, although many leaders also include additional information and/or a trail map with the route highlighted.

4) AMC Trip Sign In/Waiver Form

The AMC requires us to have all hike participants read and sign a paper [waiver sheet](#) before participating in an official hike or other AMC activity. In addition to protecting the club (and our leaders) from legal liability, it serves several other purposes. These include providing an accurate roster of all hike participants (yes, including leaders and co-leaders...) and capturing contact names and phone numbers in case of an emergency. The hike leader or designated co-leader is responsible for making sure all participants sign the waiver sheet at the trailhead prior to the hike and then mailing the completed sheet to the SEM Hiking Committee chair (currently: Paul Miller, 169 S. Washington St., N. Attleboro, MA 02760).

5) Post-Trip Report

A designated hike leader or co-leader should fill out a [Post-Trip Hike Report](#), rename it with the location and date of your hike, and email or mail a hard copy of the completed report to the [SEM Hiking Committee Chair](#) as a Word document. He/she will then format and post this report as a blogpost to the Hiking Committee's searchable (by trip date, location, and/or leaders) [online blog](#). At your discretion, you can also send a representative photo or two. We encourage you to use this blogsite as a reference when planning future hikes.

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