



CATAMOUNT TRAIL - DAY TOUR LEADER GUIDE

NORTH AMERICA'S LONGEST BACKCOUNTRY SKI TRAIL

Day Tour Leader Checklist

BEFORE YOUR TOUR

- ✓ **Know Your Responsibilities**
Review *The Day Tour Leader Responsibilities and Tour Safety Guidelines*.
- ✓ **Know Your Group**
Screen potential participants prior to the tour to ensure they have the appropriate gear, skill level, and fitness to enjoy and complete the tour safely. Remember, that as the Tour Leader you have the ultimate say in whether someone participates or not. If you're not entirely satisfied with a potential participant's ability do not hesitate to tell them they can't participate.
- ✓ **Prepare Your Group**
Clearly communicate to all participants the times, meeting locations, tour details, and necessary gear required for tour.
- ✓ **Prepare For Emergencies**
Know evacuation routes, emergency numbers, and emergency contact info for your participants. Note whether any participants have first aid or medical training.
- ✓ **Tell Participants About The CTA**
Every chance you get be sure to mention the CTA and remind participants to think about becoming members.
- ✓ **Get Online Waivers Signed**
Make sure everyone has filled out the *Online Waiver* on the CTA website. All tour documents/links are on the Tour Leader Resources Webpage - www.catamounttrail.org/cta-tours/tour-leader-resources

THE DAY OF YOUR TOUR

- ✓ **Print Waiver**
Make sure you have a paper waiver form for participants to sign. Everyone, including yourself, should sign this waiver. It's a backup to our online waiver and serves as a participant record.
- ✓ **Introduction**
Meet participants, identify who will "lead" and who will "sweep" for the group. Review skier responsibilities.
- ✓ **Emergency Planning**
Review who in the group has phones, first aid training, first aid/repair kits... and who doesn't.
- ✓ **During The Tour**
Keep your group together, and don't let people get too spread out! Early on take frequent breaks so people can adjust layers, stay hydrated, and stay fueled up.
- ✓ **Encourage Connections Between Participants & The CTA**
Promote CTA membership, trail work, other tours... Get to know your group, and encourage people in your group to get to know each other.
- ✓ **End Of Day**
Head count and debrief. Thank participants! Make sure everyone is set to get home.

POST TOUR

- ✓ **Return Print Waiver Form To CTA**
Return your waiver form back to CTA office along with brief trip report and any good photos or stories from the day. You can do this via email. Just take a photo of the waiver and attach to your trip report.



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Day Tour Leader Responsibilities

For a ski tour to be enjoyable it must also be safe. The following will help you organize and manage your tour in a way that ensures it is fun and safe for all participants, including yourself!

BEFORE THE TOUR

1. Assess Participant's Capabilities

Screen everyone's skiing ability you are uncertain of to determine if they have the skills and conditioning to enjoy and complete the tour. If one participant is not up to the tour, it affects the day for everyone on the tour, including the leader.

Ask if they have skied the tour before. If not, describe the tour, indicating degree of difficulty, steep climbs and/or downhill, backcountry or groomed, etc. If you or they are concerned the tour may exceed their capabilities, suggest they start with an easier tour they might enjoy more to test their skills.

Here are some questions that may be helpful to ask:

- What backcountry skiing have you done and where?
- What sections of the Catamount Trail have you skied and what is most recent?
- What is your longest ski in miles and when?
- Have you skied in deep, fresh snow or other difficult conditions?
- Where have you been skiing this year?

2. Sign The Up!

If you feel someone can comfortably finish the tour, get their name, cell phone number, emergency contact information, and email address. Record this info on the printable waiver form NOW to save time on the day of the tour and to ensure you can read the info.

Prepare Your Participants For The Tour

Remind participants to bring extra clothing and plenty to eat and drink in case of unforeseen problems. Urge them to read the "Skier Responsibilities" and the "Recommended Equipment List" available on the CTA website- www.catamounttrail.org/cta-tours/tour-leader-resources

3. Clearly Communicate Your Meeting Time & Location

It's always good practice to share a Google Map Link to the meeting location. If parking space is limited, try to find nearby alternatives such as a school, business, etc.

4. Prepare Yourself For Emergencies

- Review local rescue contact information and possible evacuation routes
- Be aware of cell phone coverage on the route
- Read and carry the "Tour Safety Planning Guidelines".

5. Clearly Communicate Your Tour's Dog Policy

Dogs are generally not allowed on CTA tours unless the description explicitly invites them. This is your call.

6. Educate Yourself

Get your Wilderness First Aid certification if you can. The CTA will reimburse up to \$150 of the cost. Contact the office for details, gmaino@catamounttrail.org, 802-864-5794.



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TRAILHEAD OR MEETING LOCATION

1. Get there early so participants do not wonder if they are at the correct place.
2. Make sure all participants sign the Print Waiver Form.
3. Have everyone introduce themselves.
4. Describe your planned tour route, especially all intersections and potential bail out intersections to make sure everyone follows the correct route.
5. Read the List of Skier Responsibilities. Strongly emphasize two things:
 - Stay with the group
 - Do not leave at the end of the day before checking out with the leader
6. Identify who is the Lead Skier and who is the Sweep at all times.
7. Do a head count and make sure it agrees with the number of names on the printed waiver form.
8. Ask which participants have communication, repair or rescue equipment and medical expertise in case of injury and/or evacuation.

ON THE TOUR

1. Don't let your tour get too spread out.
Know where the sweep is. Staying together promotes camaraderie and reduces the risk of losing people. The Tour Leader need not be in front and can sweep, provided the lead skier knows the route and plans for breaks. Tour participants like to ski at their own pace, making it challenging to keep the group together. The leader may allow a faster group to ski ahead, designating a second "lead skier" for the faster group and making it clear that:
 - The "lead skier" is tasked with staying on the trail and keeping the group together
 - The faster group should wait for the others at a predetermined location or intersection
2. If trail breaking is required, rotate skiers at the front every few minutes. Allow less strong skiers to stay in the back.

AT THE END OF THE TOUR

1. Count heads to make sure you have everyone!
2. Thank everyone for coming. Encourage them to join other tours, and to become CTA Members.
3. Send the Printed Waiver Form to the CTA office & identify on it any participants you think might have good potential as future tour leaders, trail chiefs or board members. Provide feedback regarding problems with the trail or trail markers. Include a short tour recap and any photos you might have taken. Feel free to take a photo of the completed waiver and submit via email.

Post Day Tour Submissions should be emailed to Greg Maino - gmaino@catamounttrail.org.

Reminder: All Documents & Links can be found on the CTA website at:
www.catamounttrail.org/cta-tours/tour-leader-resources