

These Guidelines were adopted by the Contra Costa Hills Club ("Club") board of directors on April 13, 2018, revised July 2026.

I. GENERAL

1. Membership. Membership in the Club is open to all persons who submit a Membership Application, Membership Waiver and Release, and pay the required annual membership fee. The Membership Application and Membership Waiver and Release forms must be completed and resubmitted each year upon payment of the annual membership fee. The membership Secretary will maintain the forms.

2. Club Activities. The Club organizes weekly hikes on Thursdays and Sundays, as well as occasional overnight outings and luncheons. The club also supports conservation programs.

3. Guests. Guests may participate in Club activities, including hikes and overnight trips at the Board's discretion and when space is available. Guests must sign and submit a Guest Waiver and Release form and also may be asked to sign a Day-of Hike Sign-in Sheet/Waiver and Release on the day of a Club event.

4. Minors. Guests under the age of 18 must sign or have their guardian sign the Permission/Waiver form before participating in any Club activity.

5. Website. All Club documents, including hike and event schedules, as well as these Guidelines, may be found on the Club website at: <https://contracostahills.org>. The club also maintains a member page on groups.io <https://groups.io/g/CCHChikers>.

6. Newsletter. The Club publishes a monthly newsletter for members *The KNAPSACK*, which describes recent trips and activities and provides current club news.

II. HIKER GUIDELINES

1. Hike Participation. Hikers must review the hike and/or event description carefully, including proposed distance and elevation, before registering and participating in a hike. Hikers should participate only in hikes or events that they are physically capable of handling. While on a trail, hikers must stay between the hike leader and the hike sweep. If at any time a hiker must leave early or leave the group for any reason, the leader must be informed immediately. Because of possible changes to the hike schedule (illness, inclement weather, etc.) it is advisable to check the Club's website at www.contracostahills.org or the Club page in [groups.io](https://groups.io/g/CCHChikers).

2. Registration. Members should register for themselves and any guests in advance of a hike by contacting the hike leader, if requested. If you are not carpooling, and an RSVP is not requested in the writeup, just show up at the start!

3. Meet-up. Hikers should be at the meeting place on time. If there is rain or inclement weather, the hike leader will attempt to contact pre-registered hike participants in advance of

any cancellation. When there is questionable weather such as rain or excessive heat, hikers should check the Club website or the Hike Leader to see whether the hike will take place or whether there is a change in location.

4. What to Wear for a comfortable, enjoyable hike. Hikers should wear loose, comfortable clothing. Ideally, layers of protective clothing appropriate for the weather, including sweaters, windbreakers and rain gear are advisable. Light-weight boots or walking shoes with appropriate traction for rough terrain are also recommended as are socks made of wool or a synthetic material that wicks moisture (cotton socks can get wet from perspiration or hiking conditions and cause blisters to develop). Gaiters can be worn over socks when hiking in areas with high grass during tick season. Hats and bandanas are recommended for warmth and sun protection.

5. What to Bring. Hikers should carry a day-pack or fanny-pack containing the following:

- a) at least a quart of water (more on hot days or particularly long hikes)
- b) lunch and snacks
- c) identification and emergency contact information
- d) a small first aid kit
- e) sunscreen and bug spray, when appropriate
- f) a camera/phone and/or binoculars
- g) light-weight hiking poles to help with balance on steep or rough terrain
- h) a large plastic trash bag (can be used as a makeshift rain poncho, provide a clean space to sit, be used to store muddy boots for the ride home, or store trash and litter picked up along the trail.)

6. Being Careful. Hikers are expected to exercise care and good judgment when participating in a hike and to not take unnecessary risks.

7. Waiver and Release of Liability. All participants must execute a waiver and release of liability, acknowledging and accepting the risks inherent in hiking activities.

8. Dogs. Because of liability and other issues, dogs (except service dogs) are not allowed on CCHC hikes.

III. HIKE LEADER GUIDELINES

Club Members are encouraged to organize and lead hikes and other Club activities. To that end, below are some guidelines for organizing and leading a hike:

1. Choosing a Route. Hike leaders should select a hiking route that goes with the season. In hot weather, hikes near the coast and trails that offer shade are appropriate. During rainy weather, muddy trails should be avoided. Ideally, leaders should have an alternative hike in mind in case the trail or weather is unexpectedly problematic.

2. Scouting in Advance. A hike should always be scouted a week or so in advance. Sometimes there are trail closures, flooded paths, or the trail is overgrown with poison oak, etc. On rare occasions, a foot race or another hiking group could be scheduled to be on the same route. Investigating the trail route in advance will help avoid day-of-hike issues. Leaders may borrow the Club's GPS device to verify the accuracy of hike mileage and elevation gain.

3. Creating a Hike Description. When writing up a hike description, the leader should make it short and include the start time, meeting place, contact information, approximate mileage, elevation (climb), level of difficulty, and expected conditions. It is also helpful to indicate whether poles are advised or if there will be an option to buy lunch. In the description, the leader should request RSVPs from riders and drivers so that carpools can be arranged. Occasionally, hikers may incur incidental expenses such as parking or entrance fees or bus fares. These types of expected fees should be included in the hike description. Once the description is complete, it should be submitted to the Thursday or Sunday hike scheduler. Descriptions are due on February 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15.

4. Day-of Hike Leader Instructions.

Hike leaders and/or co-leaders must be available by telephone the morning of the hike. The cell phone numbers provided in the hike description must be valid and calls must be answered.

a. Meeting up. Leaders should be at the designated meeting location in advance of the scheduled meet up time.

b. Using Cell Phones. Leaders should have a cell phone on them at all times in case hike participants need to contact them for any reason. If the leader does not have a cell phone, a contact person should be assigned.

c. Filling out Forms. A supply of Guest Waiver and Release forms, and Membership Waiver and Release forms should be available for those who have not completed them. Every participant must have signed the appropriate forms before participating in a hike.

d. Circling Up. When all hike participants are present, they should “circle up,” introduce themselves, and count off so that the number of hikers and identity of each can be recorded.

e. Appointing a Hike Sweep. If not already done, the leader should appoint a participant (preferably someone familiar with the trail/route) as the rear leader or “sweep.” This person must stay at the rear of the hike to help ensure that hikers do not get left behind or take a wrong turn. The leader should periodically check to make sure the sweep is in sight or within earshot. If this is not possible because of the terrain, leaders should have hikers regroup at regular intervals.

f. Setting the Pace. The leader sets the pace for the hike. No hike participants should be in front of the leader and no one should be behind the sweep.

g. Resting/Taking Breaks. Rest breaks should be called whenever a steep elevation gain has been covered so that hikers can regain their resting heart rate, take a drink of water, shed or add a layer of clothing, etc.

h. Having Lunch. Leaders should choose a suitable spot along the route to break for lunch. Ideally, this will be shady, level spot or a place with picnic tables and restrooms. Realistically, a halt may need to be called sometime around noon right on the trail to make the best of the surroundings.

i. Handling Late Changes. If a hike must be cancelled or modified, the leader is responsible for getting in touch with all registered hike participants as soon as possible. If the leader cannot get in touch with all participants to advise of the cancellation, the leader must be at the meeting place at the meeting time to meet any hikers who arrive.

j. Collecting Money for Incidental Expenses. Occasionally a hike may require certain reservations and payment in advance, such as hikes that include theater performances, docent-led tours of museums or historical sites, bus fares, or special transportation. When planning a hike that will include these types of incidental expenses, leaders may do either of the following:

1) make necessary reservations with the provider and pay the incidental expenses directly. The leader must then calculate a per-hiker charge and include that information in the hike description. The leader will then be responsible for collecting the charge from each participant on the day of the hike. In the event the amount collected from the hikers exceeds the leader's out-of-pocket expenses, the excess funds must be donated to the Club's general or conservation fund. Any shortfall in funds received will be borne by the leader;

OR

2) present a proposal to the Club Board outlining the hike description, the purpose of the incidental expense, the amount of the expense and the expected charge structure (e.g., flat fee or per person charge), the expected per-hiker reimbursement charge and payment and cancellation arrangements. If the Board approves the proposal, the hike may be scheduled after written approval by the president of the Club. The leader is responsible for ensuring hike participants issue their payments to the Club in advance of the hike with sufficient time to allow the payments to be deposited so that the Club can issue timely payment to the provider. Any shortfall in funds received will be borne by the Club and any excess funds received will be donated to the Club's general or conservation fund.

5. Hike Leader Discretion. The leader may exclude a member or guest from participating in a hike if the leader reasonably believes that the member or guest is not physically capable of safely participating in the hike, or that the member or guest's participation may put other hikers at risk.

IV. OVERNIGHT OUTINGS

1. Overnight Trips. Occasionally, the Club's Outings Committee will organize an overnight trip, which will be announced in advance in the Knapsack newsletter. Guidelines for overnight trips are provided on the website under Overnight Trips.

V. TRANSPORTATION

The Club is not responsible for arranging transportation to or from a hike or other Club activity. Members may voluntarily agree to drive and carpool to Club activities. Any Member or Guest who voluntarily drives other participants to Club activities must have a valid driver's license and insurance; however, the Club does not verify this information.