

KHC Standard Operating Procedures

1. Guidelines and Expectations

KHC will include a Guidelines and Expectations page on the website and review it annually.

2. Waivers

KHC will ensure that the Waiver in use is the one recommended by FMCBCC and its insurers/risk managers. KHC currently uses an on-line waiver system. The waiver will be available on the website for the use of members, Guests, hike leaders, and directors, as needed.

Any paper waiver used needs to be properly filled out and witnessed in person by a hike leader or Director of the Club. Copies of waivers are passed on to the Membership Director in a timely fashion. Waivers are kept for 7 years. All Guests must sign a waiver. No member or Guest may participate in a club event without first completing a waiver. Waivers are to be completed each calendar year.

3. Insurance

Insurance is to be renewed annually through FMCBC. A copy of the Insurance policy, incident report forms, and other relevant forms are to be kept by a Director and copies posted to the website, as required. The President or designate will ensure that insurance is managed with due diligence.

4. Society

The President will ensure that the Society filing with the Provincial Registrar is completed each year.

5. Membership

All members will be required to register annually using forms provided on-line by the club. A membership file will be kept (and backed up) by the Membership Director and updated, as required. Information from membership records will be provided to Hike Leaders or Directors on a need-to-know basis. Enquiries regarding membership will be directed to the Membership Director. The Membership Director will report to the Board, as needed.

The Board of Directors may establish and manage a membership “cap” for that calendar year, reviewing it at Board meetings. The purpose of setting the maximum number of members for the year is to ensure that the capacity of the club (the number of event leaders and total events) is sufficient to match the number of participating members.

As per the Society’s bylaws, a member retains his/her membership rights if he/she is in good standing - has registered with the club, has paid the relevant dues, and has completed a waiver. The Board may deem a member not in good standing through a motion of the Board, for a variety of reasons – safety infractions, repeated KHC policy/procedure non-compliance, harassment, unethical conduct, and/or relevant culpable behavior. The Board will remove the person’s website account and rights to book a

place on an event. Membership fees will not be refunded if the member is deemed to not be in good standing with the Society.

5.1 Membership Renewals

Annual memberships are for a calendar year. Renewals for the upcoming year will start in late fall in a process defined by the Board and explained on the website.

5.2 Minors

KHC supports family memberships and inclusion of minors in appropriate hiking events. With the risks inherent in outdoor activities, some risk management issues arise that have resulted in some KHC policies.

- we have hike leaders and Directors (and therefore Events) by virtue of an insurance policy, a legal waiver, and best-practice policies
- all members and guests must sign a waiver prior to participating in an event; this waiver effectively waives the rights to successfully sue leaders and the Club for damages
- under BC laws, no one can waive the rights of a minor, nor can the minor waive his own rights
- the practice of including minors can still be achieved with the following steps:
- Minors must be members of the Club and parents of the minor are expected to explain expectations and guidelines to the Minor
- Parents or guardians of the minor are expected to be on the hike/event with the minor and to supervise and be fully responsible for the minor
- if the minor is experiencing difficulties, the parent/guardian is expected to accompany the minor on the hike or return to the vehicle with the minor
- prior to the minor's first event, both the parent/guardian must sign the KHC Acknowledgement of Risk Form in front of a Club rep
- the hike leader has the right to refuse to include minors in any event, if circumstances are of concern

KHC has had many successful outings with minors and welcomes them and their parents/guardians for appropriate events each year.

6. Treasurer/Finance

The Society's Treasurer will be responsible for the Club's bank account, deposits, payments, and records. All financial records and reports will follow widely-accepted accounting procedures. An official financial report is required for the AGM each year. All transactions will follow approved policies and procedures established by the Board of Directors.

7. Member Voting at the AGM

All members in good standing have a right to a vote at the AGM. A couple membership is deemed to be two votes, but both parties have to vote in person. A family will have 3 votes, but all must be present to register their votes.

7.1 AGM

The annual AGM date and agenda will be posted at least a month in advance and all members will be invited through the website and newsletter.

The AGM will follow this format:

- The meeting is chaired by the President (or designate).
- All parties are welcomed as the meeting starts.
- President's Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Membership Report
- Other reports, as determined by the Board
- Questions and Answers
- Nominations and Elections
- Welcome to the New Board and any comments by the incoming President
- Adjournment of the Business Meeting
- A social and or discussion may follow

8. Board of Directors

The Board will meet within 6 weeks after the AGM. At that first meeting, the meeting schedule for the year will be initiated and Director's duties will also be established. The President (or designate) will chair Board meetings.

An agenda will be established prior to the meeting and sent to all Directors. Directors may add an agenda item in advance or at the start of a meeting. Matters of policy or expenditure (over a \$value established by the Board) require a motion and seconder and are put to a vote, following well-established rules of order. Minutes of meetings are kept by the secretary. Minutes are published to the website, once approved.

A tentative meeting schedule for the Board will be established at the first Board meeting after the AGM. The schedule may be revised, as required.

8.1 Board of Director's Duties

The following positions will be nominated at the AGM – President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary (may be combined with another role), Membership, and Leaders Program. Other members may be elected either as Directors-at-Large or as Directors with specific responsibilities. Some of those duties may include:

- Public Relations, Marketing, Social Media, Newsletter, Communications
- Equipment
- Website
- Risk Management/Insurance/Safety
- Club Programs (ie photo contest, fund-raisers, clothing, etc.)
- Social Events
- Club Infrastructure (often done by the Past President)
- Event Scheduling

The Past President is created by a motion at the AGM, if the retiring president is willing to accept the position on the Board of Directors.

At the first Board meeting following the AGM, duties will be defined for Board members.

8.2 Committees

From time to time, a committee (ie hike leaders) may be convened to further the mission of the club. The Board will appoint the Chair of the Committee and establish criteria for the Chair, Director-members, and individual members.

9. Fees

Fees for the calendar year are established by the Board before new memberships are accepted. Fees for the upcoming year will be posted on the website.

10. Affiliations

Kamloops Hiking Club has established affiliations with the Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC and the Kamloops Thompson Trails Alliance. Affiliations will be reviewed by the Board each year and a representative will be appointed to liaise on behalf of the club, reporting to the Board, as required.

11. Sponsors and Supporters

Sponsors provide cash or an offset to cash for part of the Club's budget. Supporters provide unbudgeted benefits to the Club. Sponsors and supporters are recognized on the website. Sponsors and supporters must be approved by the Board. The Board will appoint a Director to liaise with Sponsors and Supporters, if required.

12. New Members

The Membership Director and/or a designate will welcome new members and provide information to new members, as required. New members may have to go through a "break-in" period with regard to booking into posted events.

13. Events

To ensure all KHC events are covered by insurance, all events will be published to the website. All events will follow the policies and procedures established by the Club, approved by the Board, and listed on the website.

It is the Board's responsibility (or designate) to review posted events and advise the Event Leader of any required changes. Events that do not follow established policies and procedures will be revised or removed from the website.

Event Leaders are expected to follow established procedures and policies in their event postings, meet-up arrangements, and during the event. Safety of all participants will be the presiding consideration.

Expectations and guidelines for all participants are established on the website and are also part of the registration process for each event. If an Event Leader determines that a participant is not sufficiently fit, properly prepared, or experienced enough for that particular event, the Event leader may refuse to include the participant on the outing. Such actions should be reported to and reviewed by the Board. The Board will appoint a representative to discuss the event and future events with the individual in question.

13.1 Informed Consent

Participants need to know what they will face on a given club event. This is a two-sided list of responsibilities:

Participant's Responsibilities

- Carefully read the event listing
- Register for the event, having read the information
- Register for the event only if fitness, experience, equipment and listed requirements can be met
- Read and understand KHC's Guidelines and Expectations; click the checkbox if the expectations are understood
- Ensure that any sponsored guests can also meet the event's expectations
- Comply with KHC's policies, procedures, and expectations during the event.
- Communicate with the event leader if staying with the group will be a problem; ensure mutual consent if venturing away from the group (alternate routes, turning back, etc.)

Event Leader's Responsibilities

- provide an event listing that lists expectations, possible risks, and requirements (beyond the usual ones faced in the outdoors)
- communicate with the registrants if there is a question of fitness, health, experience, or preparation; if the leader perceived that the participant can't meet the expectations, KHC expects the leader to cancel the participant's booking
- Ensure that all participants have registered properly (informed consent) and have completed waivers

- Verbally confirm any expectations or arrangements at the trailhead or meet-up
- Communicate with participants during the event
- Communicate and ensure mutual consent is achieved if the participant will not be with the group (alternate route, return early, etc.); KHC expects that any such verbal agreement will be witnessed by other participants

KHC's Responsibilities

- Establish policies, procedures, guidelines, and expectations through the Board of Directors; publish these on the Club's website
- Communicate and promote understanding of the policies, procedures, guidelines, and expectations through various means (verbally, email, newsletter, website, etc.)
- Appoint Director(s) to oversee Risk Management and Event Leadership
- Develop a registration system that supports KHC's informed consent principles

13.2 Event Listings

Each event is different, but some basic requirements allow for efficient registration and management in advance of the event. The following would normally be included:

- Event Name
- Location
- Date and Time
- Duration
- Meet-up time and location
- Carpooling information
- Leader (and co-leaders, if needed)
- Distance
- Difficulty
- Category (hike, snowshoe, bike, etc.)
- Registration (number of places max, cut-off date/time, number of spots)
- Any specific items required (ie Ten Essentials, risks, special requirements, equipment, etc.)
- Cycling, paddling, and snowshoeing events may have additional information required

13.3 Managing Risks

Any organization needs to develop a strategy and implement measures to reduce risks. For a hiking club, we can group risks into three categories:

- Risks to participants
- Risks to the Event Leader
- Risks to the Club

i. Risks to Participants

We need to minimize risks to participants during an event (injury, getting lost, etc.):

- Careful event listings (informed consent)
- Communication with registered participants prior to the outing, where required
- Reviewing participant abilities, when required
- Cautions, as needed
- Interventions during the event, as required
- Precautions in case of an emergency (radios, Spot, cell phone, cell numbers, first aid, etc.)
- Understanding of KHC expectations and guidelines
- Prevention is the key; If no harm is done, there should be no risks to the hike leader nor the club

ii. Risks to the Hike Leader and the Club

- In the event of an injury or harm, if the event leader acts responsibly, most risks are considerably reduced
- It is only where the leader can be accused of gross negligence that risks are increased
- Nonetheless, anyone can start a legal action against a leader and the Club and legal costs and damages are the main risks
- The Club has insurance to cover the legal costs
- Waivers considerably reduce the likelihood of a successful lawsuit for damages
- In addition, a number of other measures improve protection for the hike leader and the Club, as follows:
 - Event listings should be clear about risks, responsibilities, and expectations (informed consent)
 - Leaders should Intervene to ensure that participants are able to handle the event or not (mostly fitness, experience, and preparation issues)
 - Clear policies, guidelines, and expectations should be listed on the website and featured in stories, emails, newsletters, etc.
 - Registration (a type of written agreement, recorded by the club)
 - Agreement with Club Expectations and Guidelines (registration)
 - Expectations that participants with medical conditions will disclose issues to the leader
 - No waiver; no hike (leaders are expected to enforce the policy)
 - An event leader may find that a participant refuses to comply with policies, expectations, guidelines, etc. The leader should intervene, if possible, but can't be responsible for all choices made by participants.
 - If leaders act with common sense, with care for safety, acts in compliance with Club policy, and in a reasonable way, he/she is managing risks and is very unlikely to have any issues with personal risk or risk to the Club.

13. 4 Event Procedures

Any specific expectations for the event may be included in the event posting, but the Hike Leader should emphasize any safety concerns for the outing at the meet-up or trailhead. A head-count will be taken at the start of the event. The Event Leader will determine the best process for managing the group, including faster and slower participants, bathroom breaks, lunch stops, rest breaks, and change of plans. Participants are expected to comply with these expectations while on the event. If participants would prefer alternate plans, they should discuss these with the leader prior to the event or after the event. If the issue is substantive (ie safety), the participant should address the issue with the leader at the time. If the issue is a matter of preference, the discussion can happen after the event with due respect to the volunteers in question, or alternately, the participant can register for other leaders' events in the future.

A number of practices are recommended to Event Leaders, but are left to the Event Leaders discretion, depending on the event circumstances:

- Use of two way handheld radios
- Mobile radios for radio-controlled backroads
- Spot devices
- GPS, map, compass
- Mobile phones
- Whistle
- Establishment of a "sweep"
- Sharing of cell phone numbers
- An emergency contact list
- Safety and survival gear
- Ten Essentials (specify which ones are required for participants)
- Water filter
- First Aid

13.5 Co-leaders and Sweeps

KHC supports the practice of having a co-leader/sweep for each event. In some cases more than one person may be required and in some circumstances, one may not be needed. The Co-leader/sweep takes direction from the Event leader, but on the whole, stays near the back of the group to make sure no one is left behind or off-track. Where possible, radios are recommended. KHC also recognizes that situations and circumstances arise whereby the leader will have to adapt and make changes in the field. The presiding principle is a "duty of care" for the participants.

13.6 Injured or Lost Participants

The Club and its Hike Leaders will emphasize personal responsibility for staying with the group and avoiding accidents. Participants are expected to all carry their own first aid kit and to follow safe practices while on Club events.

The Website will provide "what to do..." advice and Hike Leaders will discuss the procedures, as needed:

- stop immediately (Do not try to find us; we will find you)
- sit down and wait to be found.

If a hiker has to leave the trail for a nature call, they are to tell another hiker where they are going, then drop their pack, poles or something else on the trail at their exit point, and go no further than they have to into the bush.

If one of our members is missing, it is necessary to conduct a hasty search immediately for no more than 30 minutes to an hour, then notify the Police or park Ranger.

If the member is injured and unable to walk out, the authorities must be notified as soon as possible.

Search and Rescue is free. Notify the police or Park Ranger asap . It is far better to alert the authorities and SAR right away and cancel them later if not required, than to make a delayed call for help.

Search and rescue groups across BC and Alberta as well as the National Parks are trained and ready to transport injured hikers, bikers/skiers back to safety.

Event Leaders will need to complete an Incident Report Form following any incident in which a participant has been injured.

14. Medical Risks

Members or guests may choose to register on a hike/event with a pre-existing medical condition. Participants are responsible for their medications/emergency items. It is expected that the participant will confidentially advise the hike leader of any condition or risk before starting on the outing. The Board reserves the right to share medical risks with individual event leaders on a need-to-know basis.

15. Guests

The Board of Directors will establish a Guests Policy and publish the policy and procedures to the website. All guests must sign a waiver prior to participating in any event. An Event Leader may not allow an unregistered guest to come along on an event for reasons of risk management, insurance coverage, safety, and fairness.

15.1 Guest Policy

Members may invite a Guest to a listed event and will register them for the event. The inviting (sponsor) member is responsible to ensure that the Guest has read the event listing, completes the waiver, pays the fee, and stays with the Guest during the event. Members are encouraged to choose events that are not full to ensure that members have the first chance to participate in the event. The Event Leader may intervene in approving the booking if required. A Guest would normally be permitted to join an event once per year. The Board recognizes that visiting family members or friends of members may be permitted to join more than one event during a period of not more than 2 weeks. In

this case, a waiver and \$5 fees for each event is still required. The Event Leader may still intervene in approving the booking if the event space is needed for members.

The Hike Leader may be the “sponsor” of guest(s) and will be responsible for those guests, waivers, fees, etc. by adjusting the event size. The Board reserves the right to intervene in an event that is not in the best interests of the Club, if required.

15.2 Special Events

The Board may designate specific events as a special event at which the Guests policy may be amended to allow additional guests for that event. For all activity-based events, a waiver is still required. At social events (ie potlucks, meetings, etc.) waivers may not be required.

16. Meet-ups

Members can arrange any outings they wish with other members or friends outside of listed Club events. These “meet-ups” are not official KHC events and as such are not covered under the Club’s insurance policy and are the sole responsibility of the people involved.

17. Dogs

The Board of Directors will establish a policy regarding the inclusion of dogs on club events and provide the statement to the website. It will be up to the Event Leader to determine whether dogs can be included on the specific event, and or any further restrictions (ie leash). Problematic dog incidents can be reported to the Board, if additional follow-up is required.

17.1 Current Policy

Kamloops Hiking Club views itself as a dog-friendly club, but a balance has to be struck to ensure that members and guests are safe and comfortable out on the trails.

- *Appropriate Trails for Dogs with a Group of Hikers* - double track trails, low use trails (few hikers out there), support from the hike leader
- *Trails Where a Leash may be Required* - narrow trails, trails where hikers have to be careful (rocks, roots, drop-offs), Provincial or National Parks trails (their regulations are respected), trails with hazards (cactus, drop offs, snakes. loose surface, slippery conditions), popular trails on a busy weekend (lots of hikers), wildlife areas
- *No Dogs Routes* - at the hike leader's discretion, scrambles requiring careful travel, sensitive areas, special circumstances.
- Dog-friendly hikes are at the discretion of the hike leader for that outing.
- Up to 4 dogs may join a group for an outing (or less, as determined by the event leader)
- Owners must bring leashes.
- Owners should leash their dogs at appropriate sections of the trail.
- Owners are responsible for clean-up of droppings, water, and food for their dogs.
- It is not appropriate for dogs to beg for food at lunch spots.

- When participants register for a hike, they need to register their dogs too, with a comment. This allows participants who prefer to hike without dogs to make their own choices.

18. Website

A webmaster will be appointed by the Board. All members in good standing will be provided with user accounts to the website for the duration of their membership with the Club. Event Leaders will have accounts upgraded to allow them to post and edit events (but not front page posts or pages).

Any structural changes to the website will be done by the webmaster who will report the changes to the Board. All costs for the website will be borne by the Club.

19. Expenditures

All expenditures exceeding \$50 need to be approved by an approved motion of the Board. Reimbursements for expenditures require invoices and/or receipts before the treasurer can proceed. KHC does not normally provide expenses, unless approved in advance by the Board.

20. Code of Conduct

KHC expects all of its members to demonstrate respect in all Club-related Activities. The Club does not tolerate harassment in any form. Board members, Hike Leaders, and participants are strongly encouraged to be positive and supportive role models.

21. Club Events

The following event categories are approved activities of KHC: hiking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, cycling, paddling, camping, and backpacking.

21.1 Event Notes - Hiking:

- Hiking events may include scrambling, but participants should be warned in advance and a procedure established for all hikers on the event.
- Risks like getting lost, wildlife, ticks, snakes, and falls should be addressed up front, when required.
- Leaders should establish procedures and expectations for faster and slower participants on their events.
- Leaders may establish an event pace and ask that participants meet that requirement as part of registering for an event. Events that permit a wide range of fitness and ability should use co-leaders and/or a sweep to support slower participants.

21. 2 Event Notes – Paddling:

- All Nav Canada safety requirements must be met for all boats.
- Event leaders must be knowledgeable of safety and rescue techniques while on the water.

- PFDs must be worn by all participants while on the water.
- Event leaders and participants must ensure that the boat type and experience matches the type of route. Small lakes and shorelines are suitable for most boats. Rivers, larger lakes, and the ocean will require seaworthy boats.
- The Event Leader has the right to refuse any participant who is not properly equipped or does not have a boat suitable to the outing.
- KHC will appoint volunteers to oversee the paddling program for the year.

21.3 Event Notes – Cycling:

- Helmets are required for all participants.
- Participants must follow the rules of the road while on Club events.
- Participants are responsible for their own punctures/replacements while on Club events.
- Bike leaders need to address unsafe behavior from participants.
- KHC will appoint volunteers to advise the Board on proposed cycling events.

21.4 Event Notes – Backpacking:

- It is recognized that each backpacking trip is different, so KHC relies on the Hike Leader to establish the criteria for the event.
- Since the success of the trip is reliant on the cooperation/collaboration of all participants, the Hike Leader will retain the right to refuse any participants who cannot meet the group standard.
- Since the ability of participants may vary a great deal and the effect is magnified while carrying a backpack, the hike leader has to establish a process to manage safety and communications with slower and faster hikers.

21.5 Event Notes – Winter

- The Event Leader is responsible to know the risk of avalanches in the proposed area and to make decisions that reflect safety and caution.
- Any leader traveling into the backcountry where avalanches may occur is expected to have avalanche safety knowledge (or training).
- The Board of Directors may intervene to cancel any outing that is slated to go through avalanche terrain during a period of risk.
- Scheduled events may land on a cold weather day. Any event on a day below -15 degrees C should be considered very carefully. Any day with a wind chill of -20 should normally result in cancellation/rescheduling.
- On a cold weather day, leaders should check with each participant to make sure they are adequately prepared for that day. A designated sweep is a recommended practice for cold weather outings.

21.6 Avalanche Risks

- Using the Canadian Avalanche Center as a resource, KHC will cancel any event in a area that has an Extreme or High avalanche rating.
- Any event in an area that has a Moderate Rating must be led by a leader with avalanche safety training and all participants must have either the training or sufficient experience to venture into the backcountry in these conditions.
- The Board will intervene in situations of risk, if needed.

22. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

The Board will appoint a chairperson to oversee a committee which will review the SOPs each year. The Chair will make recommendations to the Board, as required.