

GANTOUW HIKE LEADER GUIDELINES

SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT, FUN IS SECOND PRIZE!

Every hike is different. These are not rules but rather a set of “best practice” guidelines.

AT HOME

1. If you don't know the route, get a map and information from the internet or from others in the Hike Leader Group.
2. Draw up the Hike Notice (see the template provided), and issue the email during office hours, preferably on the Tuesday (but not later than the Wednesday morning) before the hike.
3. Keep checking the weather forecast, and if the weather may not be suitable, confer with others from the Hike Leader Group and cancel the hike if necessary. Issue the cancellation email no later than Friday at noon (12h00). If you do not cancel the hike in time, you need to be present at the departure point so that you can explain the cancellation to those people who may pitch up.
4. Prepare your clipboard with a copy of the Attendance List, a couple of Membership Forms, and the Gantouw Code of Conduct (for your own reference in case you have to deal with a difficult hiker on the odd occasion). Remember your pen.

AT THE PARKING LOT

1. Identify newcomers who have not hiked with Gantouw before, welcome them and assess their ability to complete the hike (at least check for appropriate footgear and full water bottles).
2. Ensure all hikers fill out and sign the Attendance List, and check that they each provided their cell number and an emergency contact number (local family member or friend). **REMEMBER TO TAKE THIS LIST WITH YOU ON THE HIKE.**
3. Create awareness of the importance of carrying medical aid details while hiking.
4. Create awareness that by signing the Attendance List, hikers acknowledge that they join the hike entirely at their own risk.
5. Hand out a Membership Form to any prospective new members.
6. Collect visitor fees / permit fees / membership fees as applicable.
7. Confirm the number of hikers in the group.
8. Give out your own cell number.
9. Encourage a fair distribution of passengers among vehicles, and ensure all drivers know where to go.

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AT THE START OF THE TRAIL

1. Reconfirm the number of hikers in the group, i.e. check that all vehicles have arrived.
2. Appoint a sweep.
3. **NB – BRIEF THE GROUP** (even if you think that all are seasoned hikers):
 - a. Hikers to remain with the group at all times.
 - b. Hikers to remain between the leader (or the person appointed by the leader to walk in front) and the sweep at all times. Hikers that have a problem with the pace, should please speak to the leader or the sweep.
 - c. Hikers to never lose contact with the person behind, so that no hiker becomes isolated.
 - d. A hiker that needs to leave the trail temporarily when “nature calls”, should leave his/her pack in the centre of the trail and ask the sweep to wait for him/her.
 - e. Hikers that have any problem or issue, should please speak out.

DURING THE HIKE

1. Try to stay in front of the group throughout the hike.
2. Remain in contact with your sweep throughout the hike – confer with your sweep at tea and meal breaks.
3. Ensure that all hikers remain between you and the sweep at all times, except as agreed. (The pace is usually determined by the slowest hiker in the group.)
4. At intersections, reassemble the group to ensure that all hikers are accounted for and are on the correct trail.
5. Make a break – not later than 1 hour into the walk – and reassess whether all hikers are capable of completing the hike in a reasonable time. On the odd occasion that a hiker has to be turned back, he/she should preferably be accompanied, and in all cases ensure that such a person returns safely.
6. If you are leading a large party of hikers that over time naturally evolve into two very distinct groups (fast and slow), consider splitting the group officially (although this should not be done lightly).
7. If any serious issues arise, confer with other members of the Hike Leader Group.

SPLIT GROUPS

In the event that it becomes necessary to split the group (see above):

1. Assemble the group and verify with your sweep that all hikers are accounted for.
2. Appoint a separate leader and sweep to accompany the second group and verify the number of hikers in each group.

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3. If possible, meet up with the second group at tea / lunch to afford hikers the opportunity to change groups if required, then reconfirm the number of hikers in each group.
4. The second leader to maintain contact with the leader of the 1st group until reaching the end point of the trail.

AT THE END POINT OF THE TRAIL

1. Check with the sweep that all hikers are accounted for before leaving.
2. If there is a split group, the leader of the 1st group should remain at the end point until the second leader has verified that all hikers are accounted for.
3. Arrange where to meet up again for refreshments – this is a great Gantouw tradition that we would like you to encourage!

AFTER THE HIKE

1. Scan and email the Attendance List to gantouwhiking@gmail.com, or hand it to a Committee Member.
2. If you collected any cash at the start of the hike, preferably make an internet payment for that amount from your own bank account into the Gantouw bank account, and pocket the cash. (Bank account details are printed on the current Membership Form. Payment reference = your name + date of the hike.) If you are not subscribed to internet banking, you may hand the cash to the Treasurer, or even one of the other Committee members.