

Trip Leader Guidelines



Skills & Attributes of a Trip Leader

A competent 4WD driver does not necessarily make a good Trip Leader. Trip Leaders should always review their club rules / regulations / by-laws. It would also be advisable that a potential Trip Leader has attended a minimum number of club trips. Suggested Trip Leader pre-requisites include:

- Ability to organise and a sense of responsibility
- Effective communication skills and ability to demonstrate authority
- Knowledge of radio communications as per club policy
- Map reading skills - refer Map Reading Guide (Auslig)
- GPS skills to be used in conjunction with the relevant maps
- Minimum 4WD experience as per club policy
- Knowledge of convoy procedures and ability to organise the placement of vehicles in convoy
- Responsibility for recovery situations or delegation to a suitable person(s)
- Trip preparation skills
- Knowledge of, or research done on the area(s) proposed for the trip
- Appropriate driving experience for the selected tracks
- An understanding of the club's track classification system
- The ability to assign an appropriate Trip Rating
- Ability to select and nominate an appropriate Tail End Charlie (TEC) and Ground Charlie

The Trip Leader has responsibility for the safe running of the trip. It is the Trip Leader's responsibility to counsel prospective participants regarding their competency and the trip standard, both before and during the trip.

The Trip Leader has at all times, the absolute discretion to make the final judgement to determine the suitability of vehicles or equipment proposed to be used. Furthermore, the Trip Leader has the discretion to accept or reject any person's participation. This specifically includes drivers and passengers, whether before or after the commencement of the trip. This should be done in accordance with the club's bylaws.

Trip Participants

All participants on a trip are responsible for their own vehicles and the actions that they take. Adequate pre-trip preparation should be undertaken and as a minimum, participants should :

- Register for the trip with the Club Trip Coordinator or Trip Leader by the Wednesday prior to the trip. Some trips may have strict limits on convoy numbers. Temporary members and visitors need to complete and sign the Trip Participant Form as a temporary member or visitor
- Maintain their vehicle in a roadworthy condition and tyres must have suitable tread for the conditions anticipated. For longer range trips it is advisable to have a pre-trip vehicle inspection carried out by a reputable 4WD specialist
- Ensure that their vehicle has front and rear recovery points fitted. If not fitted as standard, they need to be installed by a competent fitter, and must be safe for use in a recovery situation
- Provide adequate personal supplies of fuel, food, water and clothing for the trip, relevant vehicle and equipment spares or as otherwise advised by the Trip Leader
- Obey the instructions of the Trip Leader at all times
- Not leave the trip without the Trip Leader's knowledge and agreement

Trip participants should have the following training / skills:

Essential

Minimum 4WD experience, in accordance with the advertised trip requirements and club policy requirements

Preferred

- Current Level 2 First Aid Certificate or as appropriate for the trip
- Bush mechanic skills

Planning the Trip

Before setting out on a trip, it is important that some basic planning is completed to ensure that the event is conducted in such a way to ensure that it is both enjoyable and safe for everyone. Selection of the route is the most important consideration. The Trip Leader should endeavour to be conversant with factors such as hazards, points of interest, campsites and expected weather conditions etc.

Consideration should be given to the following:

Type - determine the trip type eg, day trip, weekend, outback trip etc

Destination - determine the destination and/or areas to be travelled

Duration - determine the trip duration and likely stop-overs

Route - plan route (tracks) to include alternate routes in case of adverse conditions

Trip Rating – rate the trip to the highest expected standard and be prepared enroute to make changes to suit weather or track conditions. It should be noted that four wheel driving is unpredictable by its very nature and variation

Participants - decide on the number of 4WD vehicles, and the number of participants appropriate for nature of the trip. It is recommended that no more than 30 participants are included on four-wheel drive trips. This is primarily an environmental issue and for groups larger than 30, then extra consideration should be given to minimise the environmental impact of the group at rest areas, camping grounds and during vehicle recoveries

Equipment - assess if any special equipment will be required. i.e. snow chains, hand winch, chain saw, appropriate first aid kit etc. It is highly recommended that a fire extinguisher should be installed in every vehicle in a visible and easily accessible location

Vehicle Requirements – depending on trip duration and location(s), you may need to remind vehicle owners of their responsibility to ensure their vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately set up for the trip

Permits - check if permits are required for the area or areas that you may pass through

Maps – obtain relevant and current maps of the areas

Season - decide on the time of year to run the trip

Activities - consider other activities which may be included in the trip

Research - Gather information about the area to be visited, maps, books, contact other club members and relevant authorities

Supplies - consider, fuel, food, water, clothing, camping requirements, accommodation

Convoy Communications – determine minimum radio requirements for the trip in accordance with club policy. A UHF radio (either fixed or hand held) is current club policy. Hand held radios are available from the equipment officer for those participants who may not have one.

Emergency Communications – determine the communications necessary in an emergency situation. It is important to be aware of areas where normal communication equipment (mobile phones) will not operate, so the need for specialist equipment (sat phone, HF radio, EPIRB etc.) should be considered

Ground Charlie – select your base contact person (Ground Charlie), provide them with your trip details including Emergency Plans, Trip Participant List, Personal Details Forms and Temporary Member / Visitor Forms. Report to Ground Charlie on an agreed timeframe. Use Sat phone / HF Radio Mobile Phone etc. Reporting method will vary depending on length of trip and destination. Stick to a pre-arranged schedule

Definition – Ground Charlie is a person who is contactable at all times (at home or base camp) and who can contact emergency services and / or emergency contacts when and if required

Emergency Plans - develop an emergency plan in response to potential incidents such as bush fires, personal injury, mechanical or vehicle damage, alternative routes, Total Fire Bans, etc. Include emergency requirements for food, water and clothing as appropriate for the type of trip. A copy of the Emergency Plan shall also be provided to the TEC at the start of the trip and Ground Charlie before the trip.

Trip Planning Resources & Contacts

Useful contacts include:

Four Wheel Drive NSW <http://www.4wdnsw.org/>
NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service <http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/>
Dubbo 4WD Club <http://www.dubbo4wdclub.com/>
Tread Lightly Australia <http://www.treadlightlyaustralia.com.au/>
Map information www.lands.nsw.gov.au

Contact the local pub, post office, store or local Park Ranger in the area you are going.

Advertising the Trip

Trip details have to be advertised prior to the trip - preferably in the Club newsletter / magazine. For Public Liability insurance reasons, it is necessary to prove it is a club event. The current insurance policy does not cover impromptu trips run by club members .

Trip / Social co-ordinator needs to mention proposed trips at club (monthly) meetings so that they are recorded in the club minutes and retained for a minimum period of six years

Club trips must be promoted within the club and available to all members. As a guide when a trip is advertised it should have a minimum of two vacancies

The minimum advertising details for a trip shall include but not limited to:

Dates / Duration – nominate dates, commencement time and duration of trip.

Destination(s) – state the meeting point, destination(s) and approximate distance to be travelled from start to finish.

Trip Rating – advise overall Trip Rating as determined during the trip planning.

Equipment – list minimum equipment requirements for the trip in accordance with trip rating. Each club / Trip Leader shall determine the minimum requirements.

Vehicle numbers – state minimum number of vehicles (suggested maximum 10 vehicles per convoy). Each club / Trip Leader to determine the limits. Public Liability insurance requirements need to be considered.

Vehicle requirements – state minimum vehicle requirements including communications, accessories and relevant vehicle spares. Remind vehicle owners of their responsibility to ensure their vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately set up for the trip.

Recovery Gear – state minimum recovery gear required for the trip.

Provisions – state the provisions required for trip including, food, water, fuel, clothing, medication etc.

Documentation / Paperwork

The forms listed below are those that are suggested. Not all forms listed below are used by the club.

Trip Log Sheet – compulsory form - all details must be provided on every trip including visitors and temporary members

Temporary Member / Visitor – not used by Dubbo 4WD Club - temporary member or visitor status shall be in accordance with Club Rules / By-laws.

Personal Details Form – compulsory form – this form includes medical and personal details, which must be completed and signed by all participants. The form should be placed in a sealed envelope and placed in the participant's vehicle glove box. Two additional sealed copies should also be handed over to the Trip Leader

Trip Incident Report – details need to be recorded for potential insurance purposes

Accident Report – details of any vehicle (s) or property damage accident need to be recorded

Emergency Plans – refer checklist provided. The checklist can be altered to suite club rules / by-laws

Temporary Member or Visitor Attending Trip

Each club needs to decide on how to manage the attendance of a temporary member or visitor on trips. Public Liability insurance requirements need to be considered

Names and details should be included on the Trip Participants List and a Temporary Member / Visitor Trip Participant form completed and signed. (Currently not club policy). Personal Details Form(s) should also be completed, signed and handed over to the Trip Leader in sealed envelopes. (Currently not club policy).

Running the Trip

The following activities and tasks should be carried out:

Meeting point – state the meeting point and carry out all the introductions

Briefing(s) – provide trip briefing(s) and state the planned daily activities

Secure loading – remind participants to check that all equipment stored in, or on the vehicles are secured appropriately

Head count – confirm head count before, during and immediately following the trip

Trip report – nominate person(s) to complete trip report(s)

Weather – check weather reports prior to trip and if possible, every day on a multi-day trip

First aid - identify a first aider in the group and / or location of first aid kit(s)

Convoy order – determine convoy order and appoint a Tail End Charlie (TEC)

Tail End Charlie – the TEC has the responsibility for keeping the trip leader informed of the progress or delays of the group and for ensuring that gates are left open or closed as found by lead driver

Convoy procedures – explain convoy procedures as per club Rules / By-laws. Refer Appendix B.

Communication – decide on radio channel and do a radio check before departing. Channel 10 shall be used as the National 4WD Channel to contact other groups in the vicinity and to avoid head-on collisions

Ground Charlie – contact Ground Charlie as agreed

Tread lightly – look after the environment and leave nothing but footprints

Code of ethics – remind participants about the code of ethics (Refer Appendix C)

Breaks – make sure you provide adequate toilet breaks, coffee breaks etc

Setting camp – make sure you stop and set up camp well before sun set. Happy hour is a good idea and gets the group to mix and socialise

Leaving trip early – when it is agreed between the Trip Leader and a participant that they will depart the trip prior to

completion, the departing driver should confirm a safe exit route with the Trip Leader. The Trip Leader should advise Ground Charlie of the participant's departure at the earliest opportunity, being at least the next pre-arranged communication time. It is not desirable for a single vehicle to travel in the bush off-road. Where possible assign one or more vehicles, preferably with experienced drivers, to assist.

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Ending the Trip

It is important to have a definite end point.

End point - select a location during the planning stages

Announcement – make an announcement that it is the end of the trip

Getting home – provide instructions on how to get back to a known point / road or even home

Trip reports - confirm person(s) writing trip report(s)

Ground Charlie - notify Ground Charlie

Paperwork - complete the relevant paperwork - reports etc.

After the Trip

- Return club or any other equipment borrowed or on loan
- Hand in paper work (forms) to club Trip Co-ordinator , or other designated person(s)
- Ensure the trip report is submitted for club magazine by required date
- Clean vehicle and equipment after each trip and between eco-sensitive areas
- Start thinking about planning the next trip