

## **TRAILS CLUB OF OREGON – COLD WEATHER GUIDELINE FOR TRIPS**

It is your personal responsibility to be aware of your surroundings, especially in the winter. Weather conditions can change quickly, no matter how short your tour is or how close you are to home. Be prepared for changes every time you venture out. In the snow there are certain hazards you need to be able to recognize such as creek crossings, avalanche conditions, and tree or rock wells. **The rewards are worth the effort:** watching snow glisten on trees and mountaintops, enjoying the brisk air on an icy day, being proudly warm and dry on a rainy, windy day. Winter is a great time to be outdoors! Here are ways to be ready for anything Mother Nature brings our way.

### **DRESS IN LAYERS**

The easiest way to stay warm, comfortable and dry is to dress in a series of lightweight, non-binding clothing layers. This will allow you to add or remove layers throughout the day in response to weather and internal temperature changes. **Do not wear any cotton**, including jeans, t-shirts, sweatshirts, flannel shirts, traditional long-johns, socks, etc. If a participant is wearing cotton the leader may request he come back another day. Not only does that person endanger himself, but he adds a potential serious burden to the rest of the group, should they have to use all their reserve clothing to warm him up.

Shed a layer before you start to overheat: add a layer before you start to chill.

**Start with wicking long underwear.** Wicking fabrics such as Capilene, Coolmax or silk help keep you dry and warm by pulling the sweat away from your skin and transporting it out into your other clothing layers. Wicking socks and wicking sock liners are also available to help keep your feet warm and dry.

**Next add insulation.** The best way to achieve warmth is by trapping air in small holes or spaces. You'll want layers that are lightweight, comfortable, thermally-efficient and quick-drying. Popular materials for insulation layers are wool, wool blends, silk, synthetic fleece and Lycra® spandex. Wool is a traditional favorite because it's natural, durable and keeps you warm even when wet. Fleece is extremely popular because it's lighter than wool, dries more quickly, insulates while wet and is available in a wide variety of thicknesses, styles and colors. Lycra® spandex is a thin, stretchy, form-fitting fabric typically used in one-piece racing and touring suits by skiers who want low wind-drag and limited insulation.

**Add the outer layer.** An outer shell protects you from wind, rain, snow, and even sun. Precipitation and wind chill can be problems no matter how good the weather looks when you start out. Staying dry and warm is essential to staying safe. Carry waterproof and breathable shells such as a jacket with a hood and pants for sustained protection. Pack waterproof gloves and a warm, water-resistant hat. A wool or synthetic hat, headband or balaclava retains heat; a wide-brimmed hat or a baseball cap can shade your eyes on sunny days.

**Carry an extra layer.** Staying dry is an essential part of staying warm and safe. Consider bringing a second insulation layer, extra socks, extra mittens/gloves, over-mitts and a warm hat.

### **ITEMS FOR THE CARS**

- Sno-Park Permit, NW Forest Pass, or Golden Age card for driver's cars
- chains and/or snow tires along with a snow shovel for the cars
- trash bag for dirty boots after the hike
- cash for club fees and driver contributions

### **ON YOUR WAY**

- Keep together – think of yourself as part of a team.
- Follow your leader's instructions and let the leader know your needs.
- Stop at junctions to let persons behind you know which way to go. Do not go past a junction unless you know which way to go – wait for sweep if uncertain.
- If you get lost, stay on the trail and stay put. Do not panic. Keep warm and hydrated and use your whistle. Use three short whistle blasts if you are hurt (emergency) or one long whistle intermittently until found.

### **X-C SKI**

Most body heat is lost through the head, neck and wrists. Make sure that you protect these important areas with a warm hat, warm socks and thick, comfortable mittens or gloves.

Fit your skies to your boots before the trip so you know the binding works. Poles and skies need to be the proper length for you.

## **HIKE**

Consider bringing traction devices such as Yaktracs, Stableicers, Kahtoola "MICROspikes". Fit them to your boots before you come. Trekking poles help with stability.

## **SNOWSHOE**

Insulated, waterproof boots are best. Leather hiking boots work well, especially if they are waterproof. Gaiters keep snow out of your boots and keep your feet dry.

Ski poles are suggested for balance, load carrying, hiking in steep terrain, and to take a little bit of weight away from your knees.

Rent or buy modern metal-framed snowshoes that have grippers or claws on the bottom. Fit your snowshoes to your boots before the trip so you know the binding works.

Try to make your own trail whenever possible, staying out of the tracks skiers have worked so hard to set. Skiers have the right-of-way on the trail system, since it's easier for a snowshoer to step off the trail safely than it is for a skier to stop or go around.

## **TEN PLUS ESSENTIALS**

These are the things that you would need to survive spending an unexpected night on the trail.

**Insulation** – extra clothing that can be layered and wicks moisture away including a hat and gloves.

**Navigation** – map and compass, know how to use them.

**Sun Protection** – sun block, sunglasses and a wide brimmed hat, even on overcast days and when in the mountains.

**Illumination** – flashlight or head lamp with extra batteries.

**First Aid Supplies** – for emergencies. Also your completed "Emergency Contact & Medical Information Form," paper and a pen in a zip-lock bag.

**Fire** – matches and fire starter.

**Repair kit** – including a knife. Duct tape is very helpful.

**Nutrition** – extra food.

**Hydration** – extra water. (filter or purification tablets)

**Shelter** – space blanket, large trash bags plus a piece of insulation or form.

**Whistle and mirror** – to signal for help.

**Toilet paper** – a zip lock bag to carry out used paper.

## **MORE ITEMS FOR THE PACK?**

- thermos of your favorite hot drink
- insulating sit pad
- chemical hand warmers
- description of event from a guide book
- camera/binoculars
- waterproof pack cover or large trash bag inside pack to keep things dry
- snow shovel
- more??

Please, no alcohol.

Pets are allowed on designated trips only.

Good equipment for the specific activity is required for all events.

Let leader know if you have any medical concerns.