

**Trips Director Policies - Rules & Guidelines**  
**Sub Sig Outing Club, Inc. (SSOC)**  
**January 15, 2024**

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**1. Purpose and Objective**

- 1.1 Trip Rules and Guidelines are the basis for the Trips Director to govern Sub Sig Outing Club, Inc. (SSOC) trips and to mitigate risks to members during a trip.
- 1.2 The Trips Director policies are designed to provide consistent, fair, and reasonable basis for the performance of Trips Director duties in a timely manner.

**2. Definitions**

- 2.1 The term “shall” is used to indicate an action or requirement is mandatory.
- 2.2 The term “will” is used to indicate an action or requirement is not mandatory, but expected. Failure do so can impose additional risks or incur avoidable risks.
- 2.3 The term “may” is used to indicate an action or recommendation is optional or voluntary.
- 2.4 Trip is an SSOC activity or event have Trips Director approval and conform to SSOC policies, bylaws, and insurance requirements.
- 2.5 Trip listing is an announcement to members of a trip.
- 2.6 Best practices are methods or techniques that SSOC volunteers and other organizations that engage in outdoor adventures generally accept as superior to other known alternatives because the practices often produce results that are superior to those achieved by other means, or because it has become a standard way of doing things, e.g., a standard way of complying with legal or ethical requirements.

**3. Scope and Applicability**

- 3.1 Trip Rules and Guidelines shall apply equally to all volunteer members of the Sub Sig Outing Club, Inc., a Massachusetts Corporation, who volunteer to organize events or coordinate activities (hereby referred to as ‘trips’).
- 3.2 Cabin trips are trips that occur at or originate from the SSOC property located 772 Crawford Notch Road (route 302), Harts Location, NH 03182 (the Cabin). SSOC property includes all buildings, land, equipment, tools, furniture, household goods, and supplies at the Cabin, donated, or otherwise left for member use.
- 3.3 The SSOC Trips Director shall allow the following trips.
  - 3.3.1 Cabin trips.

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- 3.3.2. Activities or events including hiking, biking, skiing mountaineering, ice climbing, paddling, swimming, and other non-motorized outdoor activities.
- 3.3.3. Other events or activities aligned with the SSOC purpose as stated in the SSOC bylaws.
- 3.3.4. Volunteer work to repair, maintain, and clean the Cabin at the direction of the Cabin Director.
- 3.3.5. Volunteer trail maintenance at the direction of the Trails Director.
- 3.3.6. Day trips.
- 3.3.7. Joint events with partner organizations. Partner organizations are non-profit organizations whose objectives and policies align with SSOC. This includes the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC).
- 3.3.8. Ad hoc trips that are SSOC events or activities listed on short notice, typically less than ten (10) days prior to the date of Cabin trip or less than five (5) days prior to other trips.

#### **3.4 The SSOC Trips Director shall not allow the following trips.**

- 3.4.1. Overnight trips to the Cabin that do not compensate SSOC for operating costs unless otherwise approved in accordance to SSOC bylaws.
- 3.4.2. Trips that exclude SSOC active or life members in good standing.
- 3.4.3. Trips from which trip leaders, participants partner organizations, or third parties expect to receive a financial gain.
- 3.4.4. Charitable or fund-raising trips.
- 3.4.5. Trips the involve illegal activities.
- 3.4.6. Trips that exceed the overnight Cabin occupancy limit of 16 people.
- 3.4.7. Trips that rent the Cabin.
- 3.4.8. Trips that conflict with SSOC objectives, policies, or insurance requirements.
- 3.4.9. Hikes with more participants than allowed on the trail (typically 10).

## **4. Role of the Trips Director**

- 4.1 The Trips Director is a volunteer member elected to the Board of Directors and authorized during their term to:
  - 4.1.1. Establish or revise policies for planning, organizing, and conducting trips.

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- 4.1.2. Designate a proxy.
- 4.1.3. Recommend status of trip leader designations.
- 4.1.4. Review and approve trip requests.
- 4.1.5. Announce trips to the membership.
- 4.2 From time to time, the Trips Director or the Board of Directors may authorize an unannounced trip. Unannounced trips shall prioritize trip leader requests and SSOC's best interests. Cabin fees still apply, when applicable. Examples of unannounced trips include the following:
  - 4.2.1. A person recovering missing property from the Cabin.
  - 4.2.2. An SSOC officer or Director in the performance of their duties or; a member performing duties at the direction of a Director of Officer.
  - 4.2.3. A member providing access to SSOC property for third parties Third parties must provide evidence of requisite insurance.
- 4.3 The Trips Director will interpret liberally the policies in any situation where it shall be manifest that a strict adherence to them will work surprise or unfairness to members.

**5. Role of a trip leader**

- 5.1 A trip leader is a volunteer SSOC member in good standing who undergoes a process to become a trip leader. SSOC does not train or qualify trip leaders to be guides, instructors, or experts in safety.
- 5.2 Contact the Trips Director for the current process to become a trip leader.
- 5.3 A trip leader is authorized to organize activities and coordinate events in accordance with SSOC bylaws and policies. A trip leader is authorized to hold a key to the cabin.

**6. Responsibilities of Trip Leaders**

- 6.1 At all times when engaged in SSOC activities and operations, trip leaders shall:
  - 6.1.1. Acknowledge and support the SSOC purpose and policies including those in the Supporting Documents section of this document.
  - 6.1.2. Maintain a culture of safety. Provide a standard of care for themselves and participants. Mitigate known risks to themselves and others.
  - 6.1.3. Encourage active membership and assist new members.

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6.1.4. Report any alleged acts of misconduct to the Trips Director and President.

6.2 Prior to a trip, trip leaders shall:

6.2.1. Notify the Membership Director and Trips Director of all trip registrations prior to the trip start. Failure to do so increases the risk to trip leaders and SSOC that the trip participant(s) are not 'named insured' on the SSOC General Liability Policy.

6.2.2. Request registrants acknowledge the risks and safety of trips, either through verbal or email communication. This is for the safety of trip participants and volunteer liability protection.

6.2.3. Notify the Trips Director of persons who requested to join a trip and were refused.

6.2.4. Answer questions about the trip

6.2.5. Contact Trip Registrants 24-72 hours before the trip. Welcome and encourage all members. Share useful information as applicable:

- Names of participants.
- Times that the trip leaders expect to unlock and lock the cabin.
- Estimated expenses and estimated total costs. How you want to be paid: check, cash, both.
- Expectation that registrants reimburse the trip leader for expenses if a registrant cancels after a certain date.
- Proposed trip leader's activity plans.
- Request activity plans from participants.
- Weather and trail conditions that may impact driving or activities.
- Other details not included in the trip listing.

6.3 During the trip, the trip leader shall:

6.3.1. Follow Cabin opening procedures. Note: The Cabin and outhouses can take a couple hours to warm up in the Winter.

6.3.2. Clear walkways and paths to the extent practical.

6.3.3. Introduce new members to the Cabin. The Info for Your First Trip to the Cabin is a guide.

6.3.4. Organize communal dishwashing and kitchen cleaning.

6.3.5. Arrange access to the Cabin for trip participants to accommodate their activities, or as or as mutually agreed upon between participants and trip leader(s).

6.3.6. Have a reaction plan in the event of:

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- An overdue arrival of a participant.
  - Medical emergency of a participant.
  - Alarm in the Cabin.
- 6.3.7. Report any bodily injury or property damage that occurs during a trip to the SSOC Board of Directors within twenty-four (24) hours of the incident occurring.
- 6.4 Before the trip ends:
- 6.4.1. Settle Cabin fees, trip expenses, and membership fees with participants.
  - 6.4.2. Follow Cabin closing procedures.
  - 6.4.3. Organize cabin closing procedures and clean up.
  - 6.4.4. Note the condition of the Cabin and any issues.
  - 6.4.5. Make a Cabin Logbook entry.
  - 6.4.6. Take an inventory of Cabin staples and supplies.
  - 6.4.7. Note any items in the lost and found.
  - 6.4.8. Do not forget to turn off the heat and main circuit, then lock up.
- 6.5 After a trip ends, trip leaders shall:
- 6.5.1. Submit a properly completed Financial Trip Report and full payment of what is owed to SSOC within seven (7) days to the Treasurer, or as SSOC rules, policies, or guidelines shall require.
  - 6.5.2. Report Cabin issues to the Cabin Director.
- 6.6 The trip leader will:
- 6.6.1. Report lost and found items to the Cabin Director, Trips Director, or person responsible for a quarterly bulletin.
  - 6.6.2. Send the Trips Director information about the trip that participants voluntarily agree to include in a quarterly bulletin.
    - Copy all participants with any input that the trip leader or others submits.
    - Trip participants have the right to refuse sharing part or all the input in which the participants photo, video, or name appear.
    - The person(s) compiling, editing, and distributing the bulletin will monitor the content and personal data.
    - The bulletin will be distributed before or on the date the next season occurs (quarterly).

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**7. Who can request to participate on a trip.**

- 7.1 Any SSOC member in good standing can request to join a trip. Membership is open to everyone, and everyone is welcomed. Please contact the Membership Director.
- 7.2 If you are not a member, you may still register for a Cabin trip and become a member at the Cabin.
  - 7.2.1. The Cabin has the required applications for active membership.
  - 7.2.2. The trip leader can answer questions, assist with the application, and collect the membership dues. Your Cabin fees will be those of an annual member.
  - 7.2.3. If a person chooses not to be an active member, they must join SSOC as a temporary member. The daily membership dues for temporary members are included in the Cabin fees.
- 7.3 The SSOC prohibits overnight guests on SSOC property.
- 7.4 SSOC policy is to dedicate the Cabin to the members who volunteer to repair, maintain and clean SSOC property on annual work weekends under direction of the Cabin Director.
- 7.5 The SSOC policy is to dedicate the Cabin to the Trails Director and those who volunteer for SSOC trail maintenance activities on annual trail maintenance weekends under the Trails Director.

**8. Requirements to participate on a trip.**

- 8.1 Please visit the Trip Rules & Guidelines page of SSOC public website [www.subsig.org](http://www.subsig.org) for current versions of documents.
- 8.2 SSOC member in good standing or a person who becomes a member at the Cabin.
- 8.3 Comply with the SSOC Code of Conduct policy.
- 8.4 Read and understand the Risks and Safety information. It's for everyone's safety.
- 8.5 Familiarize yourself with Information for Cabin Trips.
- 8.6 Notify the trip leader(s) or other participants of personal distress, injury, illness, or the need for assistance.

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- 8.7 Please inform the trip leader of allergies or medical conditions that you feel they should be made aware of to mitigate risks to yourself or other participants.
- 8.8 You have a moral obligation not to infect others. Please contact the trip leader when you are sick or have a contagious illness. Common symptoms include:
- Fever.
  - Nausea.
  - Headache.
  - Fatigue.
  - Cough.
  - Sore throat.
  - Runny or stuffy nose.
  - Shortness of breath.

**9. Who can trip leaders refuse on a trip.**

- 9.1 Trip leaders shall not refuse participation of SSOC members in good standing without just cause and as agreed to with the Trips Director or a simple majority of the Board of Directors.
- 9.2 Trip leaders will honor requests to participate on a first come, first served basis. If Cabin capacity is reached, participants requests may be refused.
- 9.3 The trip leader and, the Trips Director or Membership Director, shall refuse a current or past member that is not in good standing as recorded in the Membership Directory.
- 9.4 Persons who are refused to join a trip may appeal to the SSOC Trips Director. When necessary, the Trips Director will use the following guidelines to authorize refusal for a participant to join a trip.
- 9.4.1. Membership status.
  - 9.4.2. Persons that exceed trip capacity.
  - 9.4.3. Persons who have not signed up or registered with the trip leader before the registration deadline.
  - 9.4.4. Persons unprepared to participate in the trip and could result in an unfortunate, serious, or tragic event for themselves or others.
  - 9.4.5. Persons who present a safety concern or medical risk, is disruptive, or acts in any manner detrimental to the SSOC or the trip.



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**10. Process to be designated a trip leader.**

Please contact the Trips Director for the process to become a trip leader.

**11. Process to create, modify or cancel a trip.**

The process to request and list a trip is on the SSOC website. It includes the methods that the Trips Director will use to announce trips.

**12. Process to register for a trip.**

- 12.1 Look up trips that are listed on the SSOC public website [www.subsig.org](http://www.subsig.org). The trip listings have the trip leader(s) contact information. Contact the trip leader before the deadline to register or ask questions.
- 12.2 If the trip leader does not or is unable to respond, please notify the Trips Director. Contact information is on the SSOC public website [www.subsig.org](http://www.subsig.org).

**13. Cabin fees.**

- 13.1 Unless the membership or Board of Directors approve otherwise, SSOC members must compensate SSOC for operating costs of SSOC property. Any member that uses the property will be charged in accordance with SSOC policies. Please contact the SSOC Treasurer for questions, concerns, or comments.
- 13.2 Cabin fees apply to everyone 18 or older who stays overnight on SSOC property, including tenting.
- 13.3 Cabin fees for temporary members include a daily membership fee.
- 13.4 Cabin fees are posted at the Cabin.
- 13.5 Trip leaders are responsible for collecting Cabin fees from participants before the end of a trip. Trip leaders may request cash, check, or both from participants.

**14. Trip expenses.**

- 14.1 SSOC does not reimburse members for trip expenses. Trip leaders are responsible for all trip expenses including use of the Cabin landline phone for personal calls.

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- 14.2 Trip leaders may request reimbursement of trip expenses from trip participants provided that all the following conditions are met.
  - 14.2.1. The reimbursement is for a participant's fair share of expenses arising from the person's participation on the trip.
  - 14.2.2. Trip leaders use a reasonable method to distribute expenses equally among trip participants including the trip leader.
  - 14.2.3. Trip expenses are not applied to persons who cancel a trip registration before the trip registration deadline unless the trip leader advised trip registrants otherwise.
  - 14.2.4. Trip expenses per person do not exceed 50% of the GSA per diem rate for Bartlett, NH. **Note:** Typical trip expenses with meals are closer to 25%.
- 14.3 Best practice is to notify registrants of approximate costs for trip expenses prior to a trip.
- 14.4 Please report any conflict about trip expenses between participants and the trip leader(s) to the Trips Director.

## **15. Cabin inventory costs.**

- 15.1 Inventory includes items such as paper products, food storage products, trash bags, and basic cooking ingredients.
- 15.2 SSOC members voluntarily donate a Cabin inventory for the benefit and convenience of all members. SSOC does not require members to donate Cabin inventory. SSOC does not reimburse trip leaders or participants for the costs of Cabin inventory.
- 15.3 Trip leaders shall notify the next trip leader or Trips Director of Cabin inventory quantities and potential shortages. Trip leaders may use the Cabin inventory forms.
- 15.4 Trips that do not donate cabin supplies put the burden on other trip leaders. SSOC expects trip leaders to replenish Cabin inventory consumed during their trip, whether participants reimburse them or not. Best practice successfully followed for over twenty (20) years is for:
  - 15.4.1. Trip leaders to include the costs of known cabin inventory shortages in the trip expenses.
  - 15.4.2. Limit the costs to 50% of the GSA per diem rate for incidentals per person.
- 15.5 SSOC authorizes reimbursement of Cabin inventory consumed during the following events:

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15.5.1. Trips under the direction of the Cabin Director to repair and maintain the Cabin and property.

15.5.2. Trips under the direction of the Trails Director to maintain public usage trails.

**16. Pets.**

16.1 Well-behaved dogs may be allowed on trips provided that all the following conditions are met:

16.1.1. The trip leader permits pets.

16.1.2. Local, state, or Federal regulations permit pets.

16.1.3. The pet owner assumes all liability and risks to the pet and arising from the pet.

16.1.4. The pet has a current license and vaccinations are up to date.

16.1.5. The pet always remains under control or leashed.

16.1.6. Pet waste is properly collected and disposed (carry in, carry out).

16.2 Trip leaders may allow other pets, but SSOC has little or no experience with pets other than dogs.

16.3 Trip leaders are not required to allow pets under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). SSOC does not serve the public and emotional support animals do not qualify as service animals.

16.4 Trip leaders should inform participants that pets may or may not be allowed in the trip listing.

16.5 For the safety of pets and participants, trip leaders shall:

16.5.1. Notify trip registrants of pets, breeds, sizes, and temperament that will be on the trip.

16.5.2. Request participants notify the trip leader of any allergies, concerns, or questions.

16.6 Trip leaders shall require pets remain outside the Cabin when:

16.6.1. Any Cabin occupant has pet allergies, fears, or concerns.

16.6.2. The pet creates risk of injury or damage to any person, animal, or property.

16.6.3. Please check pets for ticks prior to entering the Cabin. Pets are not allowed on Cabin furniture or in sleeping areas. Do not leave pet food out overnight. It will attract mice.

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**17. Administrative and Disciplinary Actions.**

- 17.1 The Trips Director has authority to impose certain administrative actions to enforce SSOC policies and Trip Rules and Guidelines. Members may appeal the actions to the Board of Directors. Please contact the Trips Director for definitions of administrative actions.
- 17.2 When an investigation of an administrative issue reveals possible misconduct, the Trips Director shall treat the allegation(s) separately and follow the process in the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct applies to all SSOC members in all SSOC operations and activities.

**18. Process for revising Trip Rules and Guidelines.**

- 18.1 This document will evolve with current best practices, lessons learned, diversity of members, and other situations as they may arise from time to time.
- 18.2 The Trips Director shall review policies and SSOC insurance policy at least annually.
- 18.3 The Trips Director has oversight of the Trip Rules and Guidelines. Members shall submit proposed revisions in writing or email to the Trips Director or proxy. Proposed revisions should include the purpose of the revision and the impact on the following items:
- Benefits and considerations for SSOC and its members.
  - Alignment with SSOC objectives and bylaws.
  - Risks to SSOC, trip leaders, and participants.
  - SSOC's volunteer capacity.
  - Best practices for volunteer nonprofit organizations.
- 18.4 The Trips Directory may convene an Advisory Council for advice and consent from members prior to revising a Trip Director Policy.
- 18.5 The Trips Director shall submit revisions to:
- 18.5.1 The members in good standing designated trip leaders for advice and suggestions.
- 18.5.2 The Board of Directors to verify conformance to the Director's written policies in effect.
- 18.5.3 The President to verify conformance with bylaws.
- 18.5.4 The Treasurer to verify conformance with insurance requirements.
- 18.5.5 The Secretary for recoding the revision and date that the policy is effective.

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18.6 All members in good standing may revise policies in accordance with the SSOC bylaws.

18.6.1. In the absence of the announcement of a vote within forty-five (45) days of notification and distribution of the proposed revisions, the Trips Director shall have fiduciary responsibility and authority to make a final approval decision provided that either of the following conditions satisfied.

18.6.2. Trips Director proposed the revisions in accordance with the SSOC bylaws or made a motion to accept the revisions, or

18.6.3. The Trips Director notified and distributed a draft of proposed revisions to all members for review no later than twenty-one (21) days prior to voting.

## **19. Supporting Documents that are part of Trip Rules and Guidelines**

If a document cannot be found on the SSOC public website [www.subsig.org](http://www.subsig.org), contact the Trips Director.

- Code of Conduct.
- Risks and Safety.
- Information for Cabin Trips.
- Process to Request a Trip.
- Process to Become a Trip Leader.

## **20. Related Documents for creating this document.**

Contact the Trips Director for further information.

- SSOC Bylaws.
- SSOC's General Liability Insurance Policy.
- 2023-2024 Trips Advisory Council meeting notes.
- SSOC Trip Leaders Handbook.
- Cabin opening and closing procedures.
- SSOC Membership Directory.
- Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 scholarly legal articles and cases.
- Various sources for explaining the legal doctrine for Assumption of Risk.
- AMC Volunteer Resources: <https://www.outdoors.org/community/center-for-outdoor-learning-and-leadership/volunteer-resources/>
- The AMC Volunteer Outdoor Leaderships handbook section on liability is very useful: <https://www.outdoors.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2023-OPC-Vol-Handbook.pdf>