



# OTAGO TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB



**Multi-Day Trip Leadership**  
*OTMC Guidelines and Information  
for club leaders*

# OTMC Multi-Day Trip Organisation

Thank you for leading an OTMC weekend (or longer) trip. As in all voluntary organisations, the OTMC rely on members to organise and lead our tramping programme - be assured that your contribution is appreciated by participants and the wider OTMC!

The notes included in this booklet are provided to assist you with the planning and execution of your trip. In some cases, the club has rules in place that are designed to ensure safe and enjoyable trips. Other notes are based on past experiences, and are presented here to assist with the organisation of your trip.

## Planning vs Leadership

There are two distinct roles when it comes to organising a multi-day trip, pre-planning before the trip departure, and leadership during the actual trip itself. The pre-trip planning can be relatively simple if everyone is aware of and follows our guidelines. Leadership is a separate skill that may come naturally, or is gained by experience over many trips. There are various types of leadership styles, and by default leadership by consensus is the most common - but the party leader must be able to take sole control at when required, and make decisions that are respected and followed by his / her tramping companions. All OTMC leaders have the authority to make decisions as required, and participants on our trips are expected to follow the leader's instruction.

## The OTMC Trip Card

The OTMC publish a six-monthly trip programme - currently this is released as a summer programme (November to April), and a winter programme (May to October) to coincide with the committee year.

The weekend trip programme is normally a mix of trips that the Chief Guide nominates along with ideas from trip leaders. The aim is to provide a balance of trips that have wide appeal and are suitable for as many members as possible. There can be an element of tradition with the trip card - trips such as the Winter Routeburn and Snow Caving have long featured on the programme, and have been popular trips.

The club makes the most of longer tramping opportunities as well, i.e. Waitangi Day, Easter, ANZAC Day, Queen's Birthday, Matariki (from 2022) and Labour Weekend. In some cases adding a couple of days off work may mean longer trips can be planned. Otago Anniversary Weekend is a little problematic due to it being celebrated on different days by different people.

Some trips are limited to a certain trip grade, which is fine for a very specific trip such as a crossover of the Routeburn track, but can be detrimental to some members of the club as it limits options to go tramping if (i.e. if only fit trips are planned the majority of members can be excluded). In some cases, having other parties in the area can help with transport options if a party need to be dropped off and picked up at different locations.

## Choosing where to lead a trip

There are different reasons people lead trips. It may be that they have been to a destination and thought it would make a good club trip, or it may be somewhere you have always wanted to go, but it never ends up on the OTMC programme. OTMC weekend trips traditionally visit an 'area' rather than any 'specific trip' - this then allows the individual parties to choose their actual trip based on their grade, experience and desire. An example of this is instead of running a trip to Gertrude Saddle, the trip could be listed as 'Fiordland - West of the Divide'. A benefit of this approach is that club trips do

not travel as one large group, which can create mismatch, slows travel and avoids trampers from the same party being spread over a wide area.

Some trips will be destination based, such as a Kepler crossover trip, or a cycle trip along somewhere like the Alps To Ocean trail.

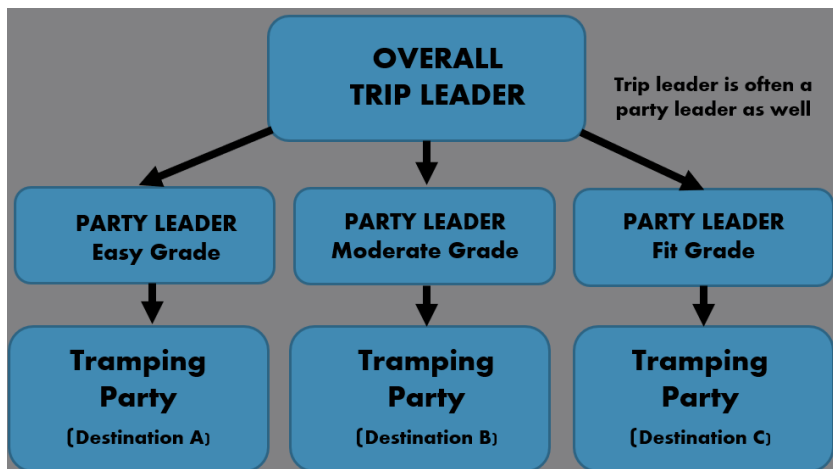
When choosing a trip destination, be aware of the time of year. Things to consider include the amount of daylight available vs the expected tramping time per day, camping requirements, snow conditions (be careful about choosing alpine areas in the Spring) and river flows. Remember that on average river levels normally increase from September through to December below the mountains as part of the spring thaw.

## OTMC Tramping Party System

The OTMC has developed a system over many years that is based on having smaller tramping parties that may travel to separate areas within a wider area - i.e. a trip to Fiordland may have a party undertaking the Mistake Creek / Hut Creek circuit, a trip along the Livingstone Mountains and another trip to the head of the Caples and return. The benefits of this system are:

- Trampers of similar fitness travel together, avoiding people becoming separated.
- Development pathway for aspiring leaders, i.e. from day trip leader, to party leader, then weekend trip leader, and ultimately into a role such as Chief Guide
- It removes the responsibility from the weekend trip leader in looking after everyone on a trip - **one person cannot effectively lead more than 4-6 people** - each party is fully supported by a competent leader, and are self-sufficient in all respects.
- A party co-leadership system can be used where new leaders can lead the party while having an experienced leader alongside (leadership mentoring)
- Reduced impact on the environment.

A basic level diagram of the system is shown below. The principle is that the party is completely self-contained, and arrange all their own food and equipment, as well as selecting a trip that is within the capability of all party members.



## Weekend Trip Leader Preparation

Planning for an OTMC weekend trip should normally start 6-8 weeks in advance. If you are not familiar with an area, then you will need to research the trip. Sources of information include Moir's Guide for areas south of Mt Cook, maps (use the current Topo50 series), other club members or the Internet. The Walking Access Commission run the WAMS website (<http://walkingaccess.govt.nz/>) - this is helpful in identifying all areas of legal public access. If your trip is planning to cross private property, then permission must be obtained prior to the trip (*and remember to thank the landowner at the completion of the trip - this helps to maintain a good relationship with the landowner for future trips*).

Coming along to club meetings to promote your trip is a good idea, especially if you can show an overview of the area and some photos to encourage people to sign up (*enthusiasm for the trip always helps!*)

You will need to provide a 'blurb' for the Weekly Update, be aware of the closing date of the trip and plan to have your blurb published a couple of times 3-4 weeks out from the closing date.

You can also publicise your trip via our email list or Facebook page (*if using Facebook be aware that the number of people subscribed to the OTMC page is over 2,500, some people obtained via Facebook may think we are offering a guided walk*)

## After the Trip List Closes

Weekend trips normally close eight days before departure - this is to allow parties, transport and other arrangements to be made. Signing the trip list is a commitment, all participants need to accept this - people pulling out after the list closes creates problems for the leader and others on the trip. The OTMC do accept that people may need to withdraw from a trip for unforeseen reasons, advise people who withdraw from the trip after the list has closed that they required to pay the trip cost unless a reasonable explanation is provided for the OTMC Committee. Please advise the Chief Guide of any such cases. *NOTE: Providing a suitable substitute means such persons withdrawing are exempt from this liability.*

Appoint party leaders in consultation with the Chief Guide. Party leaders must have experience and be reliable. If a person has potential to be a future leader, appoint them as a co-leader, with the object of leading the party, but with an experienced trumper in the party for back up.

Organise parties in consultation with the Chief Guide. Four is the ideal number in a tramping party and should be the minimum party size. Two parties of two can combine to make a four-person tramping party. Discuss party composition with the Chief Guide.

Trip participants are asked to indicate their preferred fitness grade when signing up, this information is used to put similar graded trampers together - mis-matched parties can cause frustration and issues, and have led to people becoming lost or left behind. The OTMC grading system (E, M, F etc.) are described on the trip card, in the Weekly Update and on our website. Bad weather (cold / rain / wind etc.) will make trips longer or harder - have a 'Plan B' or a turn around time / back out plan.

Check that all parties have adequate equipment and clothing – don't leave it to chance. The individual party leaders will check with their own party members (there is a [planning checklist](#) on the OTMC website).

A Search and Rescue person needs to be appointed for every trip - this person will remain in Dunedin and hold a list of all parties and participants details. Organise a responsible person remaining in

town to act as the Search and Rescue contact person (this is separate to emailing the otmcpb list). Make sure all people on the trip know who the person is and what they are there for. It is also important you inform your contact of your safe arrival back in town. In the event that you do not contact the SAR person, then they will initiate notification to the Police of an overdue party / trip. Full details of the OTMC policy regarding SAR is available on our website (see '[OTMC Multi-Day Search and Rescue Procedure](#)')

The PLB contact list, Treasurer and Chief Guide also require a copy of the trip list prior to the trip - this can be done emailing your list to: [otmcplb@gmail.com](mailto:otmcplb@gmail.com) (the PLB list is not a substitute for a SAR Contact person)

## Transport

One purpose of the OTMC is to share resources so that trips can be run economically, both financially and environmentally. For transport, this means that sharing of vehicles should be encouraged to reduce cost. The OTMC have decided to utilise rental vehicles as much as possible, as this can keep the trip cost down and reduce wear and tear on members cars. The club does have [guidelines](#) that can be used. The main points are:

- Rental Vans should be 90% full to breakeven
- Private cars should be 75% full to breakeven
- Rental transport is arranged by the Transport Officer (normally the Chief Guide)
- At least two drivers per vehicle are required (especially for the homeward leg).

### Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club - Official Trip List

<b>Destination:</b>				<b>Trip Cost – Member:</b> \$		Please provide an alternative phone number where we can contact someone at your home if, for example we will be late home. Tick the 'Emergency Only' column if this number is a 'Next of Kin' number only.		<b>Emergency Only</b> Number (tick if yes)
<b>Dates:</b>		<b>Trip List Closes:</b>		<b>Trip Grading:</b>				
<small><b>Notes:</b> Signing this list makes YOU liable to pay the trip cost. Refunds only on written application to the Committee. <b>Members:</b> The trip cost is payable before departure - otherwise a late fee is payable. <b>Non-Members:</b> Please pay the Treasurer upon signing this list. <b>Attention Non-Members:</b> Please make yourself known to the trip leader or Chief Guide if this is one of your first trips.</small>								
Name	Email (please write clearly)	Phone Number	OTMC Member?	Preferred Trip/Route (Note 2 below)	Your Grade	SAR or Emergency Contact Ph Number		✓
Leader								
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**Note 2:** If you have a particular trip in mind, please indicate on this list. While we will endeavour to accommodate this, we do not guarantee being able to do so on all occasions due to leader unavailability, transport problems or other circumstances.

*Above: The Official Trip List that will be in the clubrooms - if collecting names via email, phone, text etc. then collect this information from the prospective participant*



# LEADERSHIP

All the prior points are part of the actual organisation of a trip - the leadership aspect only starts when you start tramping.

The party leader is responsible for the safety of their party, the enjoyment of those in the party and the successful accomplishment of the trip (but not to the detriment of safety). Leadership skills are learnt over time, and often previous trips have provided an incident or event that has ultimately aided your ongoing leadership development.

Most trips can be led by consensus, in that you consult with your party members and you all agree on a decision and head off. Sometimes though, there will be times when you have to make decision and require that your party members follow through with your instructions. Examples of this could be a river-crossing, or making a decision to retreat due to slow progress or conditions.

A trip can only have one leader. What s/he say goes BUT seek the advice and knowledge of others. Talk facts, not opinions, then make the final decision. Make sure all party members know and understand the decision. Always think OF and FOR the group as a whole.

As a leader, always assess the party, progress and time of day - a good leader will always turn back in good time, always allow a safety margin. Safety is the most important aspect of leadership - never let desire over-ride sound judgment. There can only be one leader - do seek advice from others. In most cases consensus is a sound leadership method, but as the leader be prepared to make a decision for the whole party and stick to it.



In cold and wet weather, watch for signs of hypothermia - apart from the weather conditions, inadequate food and water can contribute to hypothermia. Other contributing factors can include lunch stops in cold conditions (especially if clothing is wet) or not travelling at an adequate speed to maintain body heat - this can happen with different fitness levels within the party. Look for signs of party

members becoming chilled, have goose bumps, shivering, clumsiness, slurred speech or responses and actions are slow. If you notice these, then you must stop the party, do what you can (as a party) to look after the patient. For more serious cases, you will need to use spare warm clothes and survival blanket.

If there is an incident on your trip (accident etc.) then ask the whole party for help - there may well be trained people who can assist.

## During the trip:

- Keep your party together (stick together), if there is a chance faster trampers may get in front (i.e. going up hills) make sure you agree on a point where you will regroup (i.e. track junctions, rivers etc.) Do not allow your party to become stretched out.
- Move at the pace of the slowest member. Sometimes it is best to lead from the rear.
- It is also important not to leave anyone behind - appoint a person to keep an eye out at the back (tail-end Charlie).
- At obstacles such as rivers maintain strict control. Keep the party together and see that they follow appropriate methods for the crossing. Never take rivers lightly.
- If conditions are wet and cold, watch for signs of hypothermia. Never let the party split in these circumstances – stronger members will be needed to assist weaker ones. The party may have to turn back, or camp short of it's destination.

**A good leader will have the courage to turn back in good time.**

## At the completion of the trip

If you encountered any issues during the trip, discuss these with the weekend trip leader and / or the Chief Guide. By discussing things that may have worked well or gone wrong means we can all learn from this.

Arrange for someone to write a trip report. Trip reports are more useful if you include track conditions, times or other things that may assist future trampers to the area. It is also important to include full names for participants - our trip reports become our club archive, and full names are an important archival record of our club.

If possible ask or appoint someone to write the trip report before you start tramping, this will allow notes to be taken along the way to aid with the writing of the report.

## Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) use on club trips

A PLB is now considered a standard item for trampers and are mandatory on all club trips (both day and weekend). The club has multiple PLB's available for club trips - ideally every party should have at least one PLB (often private ones are used to augment the club ones). The PLB's can be obtained from the Gear Hire Officer - there is no charge for these. It is important that your SAR list of participants is also emailed to [otmcplb@gmail.com](mailto:otmcplb@gmail.com) - this is forwarded automatically to our PLB contact list, these are the people the Rescue Co-ordination Centre will contact upon one of our beacons being activated.

## Safety Plan

The club has discussed updating our policy regarding risk and hazard management. We don't intend to make this too onerous, but the OTMC has a duty to outline any known and potential hazards. A known hazard could be where we have been advised of a piece of track that has slipped away, with a detour in place. Potential hazard's will exist on all trips, and generally be the same everywhere we go. Hazards could include rivers, muddy tracks, uneven ground, slippery rocks, off track travel, weather or multiple tripping hazards. If we reasonably expect to encounter these types of hazards, then the leader should advise all participants before departure from the clubrooms.

In the event of an incident on a trip, the trip leader must report this to the Chief Guide.



## Non-members on Weekend Trips

We welcome non-members of the OTMC on our trips - in fact, before becoming a member, people have to complete two trips with us. We do require non-members to contact the trip leader before the trip. This is to confirm the plans for the trip, discuss experience and go over the clothing and equipment required. The leader should also outline the basic club principle of sticking together, irrespective of fitness variations.

For weekend trips, there is a non-member surcharge - this is calculated at 20% of the current full subscription (in 2020-21 this is \$13.00 per non-member).

Leading an OTMC trip is an essential part of the club's activity - without leaders there would be little point in running a tramping club. Thanks for being a leader!