

## NVHC Safety Policy

*“In all our outings we will strive to make every hiker safe and comfortable.”*

### Notes:

1. The policy only attempts to assure safety; it does not guarantee it.
2. Actual safety and the hiker’s perception of safety (comfort) are both addressed. I think that hiker perception of how safe he or she is on a hike is very important.

## Planning

The following steps are used to implement the above policy:

1. Identify *unsafe* and *uncomfortable* situations which may occur on hikes and Club outings (within reason).
2. Determine what (1) the club, (2) the leader, and (3) the hiker can do to (a) prevent, (b) prepare for, and (c) respond to these situations.

This analysis will result in action items for the club, the leaders, and the hikers, some of which are included in the *NVHC Hike Leader’s Guide* and the *NVHC Hiker’s Guide*. As appropriate. If we need to address a new unsafe situation in the future, we go through the same steps as above.

Leaders in our club enjoy a lot of freedom, and the safety policy should not interfere with this freedom to the maximum extent possible.

## Unsafe Or Uncomfortable Situations

- *Injury:* Has happened many times, including serious injuries.
- *Medical problem:* Has happened a couple of times - and serious ones too!
- *Dehydration/hunger*
- *Hypothermia/Heat exhaustion*
- *Hike too hard:* This used to happen a lot more prior to the rating system.
- *Hiker lost, left alone or too far behind:* This has happened and it *is* uncomfortable.
- *Car lost:* (lost while driving to trail head) Happens many times.
- *Leader lost*
- *Insect bites*
- *Blisters:* Occur often.
- *Unusual hiker*

Following is the Club’s analysis of some of the above problems.

### Injury

	Prevention	Preparation	Response
Club's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise leaders to avoid dangerous terrain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train leaders</li> <li>Provide emergency phone #s</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep track of incidents</li> </ul>
Leader's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid dangerous terrain</li> <li>Avoid dangerous weather</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get trained in first aid/CPR</li> <li>Carry first aid kit</li> <li>Know where to get help</li> <li>Carry emergency phone #</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>taught by first aid/CPR course (we hope!)</li> <li>Report incident</li> </ul>
Hiker's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notify leader of potential problems</li> </ul>		

### Medical Problem

	Prevention	Preparation	Response
Club's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warn hikers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep track of incidents</li> </ul>
Leader's Role		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get trained</li> <li>Carry first aid kit</li> <li>Know where to get help</li> <li>Carry emergency phone #</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>taught by first aid/CPR course (we hope!)</li> <li>Report incident</li> </ul>
Hiker's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notify leader of potential problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry medication / supplies</li> </ul>	

### Hiker Lost, Left Alone, Or Too Far Behind

	Prevention	Preparation	Response
Club's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise leaders to keep track of hikers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide emergency #s</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep track of incidents</li> </ul>
Leader's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep group together: wait at trail junctions</li> <li>Advise hikers of rules/regrouping points</li> <li>Use arrows or signals to mark right trail</li> <li>Use sweeps</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Call for help</li> <li>Find hiker</li> <li>Report incident</li> </ul>
Hiker's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow advice</li> <li>Keep track of fellow hikers</li> </ul>		

### Dehydration and Hunger

	Prevention	Preparation	Response
Club's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise hikers to bring food and water as recommended in new sign up sheet</li> </ul>		
Leader's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mention at parking lot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize symptoms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report incident</li> </ul>
Hiker's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow advice</li> </ul>		

### Hypothermia

	Prevention	Preparation	Response
Club's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise hikers to wear warm dress as specified in new sign-up sheet</li> <li>Ban cotton during cold weather</li> </ul>		
Leader's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise at parking lot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize symptoms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report incident</li> </ul>
Hiker's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow advice: prepare well</li> </ul>		

### Heat Exhaustion

	Prevention	Preparation	Response
Club's Role			
Leader's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring extra water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise hikers to bring extra water</li> <li>Take frequent rests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report incident</li> </ul>
Hiker's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring sunscreen, hat</li> <li>Hydrate before and during the hike</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring extra water</li> </ul>	

### Hike Too Hard

	Prevention	Preparation	Response
Club's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise hikers of difficulty rating</li> </ul>		
Leader's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise hikers of difficulty rating</li> <li>Advise hikers of dropout points (if any)</li> <li>Screen hikers</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report incident</li> </ul>
Hiker's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow advise</li> </ul>		

### Car Lost

	Prevention	Preparation	Response
Club's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide sample good directions to leaders</li> </ul>		
Leader's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare good directions</li> <li>Consider a "caravan"</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report incident</li> </ul>
Hiker's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow directions</li> </ul>		

### Blisters

	Prevention	Preparation	Response
Club's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise hikers to wear proper footwear (as in new sign-up sheet)</li> </ul>		
Leader's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise hikers to apply mole skin ASAP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry mole skin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report incident</li> </ul>
Hiker's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow advice</li> </ul>		