



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Trips for Kids Vancouver makes a positive impact on the way young people view their community, the environment, and themselves. Our wilderness bike rides promote community involvement, leadership development, cultural understanding, and environmental stewardship through development of practical skills and the simple act of having fun.

Trips for Kids Vancouver

Employee Handbook

Welcome to Trips for Kids Vancouver. This employee handbook contains important information about the organization, and your exciting new role!



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1. ORGANISATION DESCRIPTION

Our History

In March 2001 *Trips for Kids Vancouver* became the first Canadian chapter of a non-profit organisation that started in Marin County, California in 1986. *Trips for Kids Vancouver* (TFKV) offers mountain biking excursions for low-income and inner city youth. Our goal is to combine lessons in personal responsibility, achievement and environmental awareness through the development of practical skills and the simple act of having fun. Thanks to a committed staff, great volunteers and successful fundraising TFKV has enjoyed working towards this goal through five summers of riding with our city's young people. The organisation is now preparing for a sixth summer of operations. In addition to the existing weekday ride program, 2006 will feature overnight destinations as well as our new skills development program.

Our Vision

Trips for Kids (TFK) Vancouver has a vision of a world in which outdoor recreation is accessible to everyone. We know that the forests, mountains, and waters surrounding Vancouver present opportunities for fun, enriching, healthy, and educational experiences. We believe that free access to these natural areas entails a variety of important benefits for individuals and their communities.

Our Objectives

Trips for Kids Vancouver makes a positive impact on the way people view their community, the environment, and themselves through wilderness bike rides that promote the concepts of community involvement, leadership development, cultural understanding and care for the environment. We use the bicycle as a tool to combine lessons in personal responsibility, achievement, cultural understanding, and environmental stewardship through development of practical skills and the simple act of having fun.

- Provide outdoor recreational activities generally unavailable to our target population.
- Use these activities to foster an appreciation of the natural world.
- Promote an active, healthy and responsible lifestyle.
- Offer an alternative to involvement in gangs, street crime and drug abuse.
- Promote the principles of environmental stewardship.
- Allow participants to develop self-esteem, resiliency and leadership skills.

2. JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Project Coordinator

The program coordinator is responsible for designing, initiating and implementing the summer rides program. The minimum tasks for a successful program include:

- Control of ride scheduling process during June
- Work with community centre and youth agency staff to facilitate rides: includes recruiting new centres/agencies for rides, conveying details of the rides, distributing and collecting relevant forms/waivers, ride evaluation follow-up, etc.
- Facilitating all details of the rides and/or delegating parts of this process to the ride leader as needed.
- Participating in all scheduled rides as a leader and coordinator; ensuring a safe, fun and friendly environment for all participants.
- Taking initiative to develop and improve the rides program. This work may include environmental education ideas, personal development for participants, and any other changes that enhance the program and strengthen the organisation.
- Responsible for budgeting, finances, expenses and payments throughout the summer
- Communication with partner organizations, including media, funding agencies, sponsors, biking organisations, TFK Board Members, etc.
- Developing new relationships with relevant community and corporate organizations to facilitate growth and awareness of the TFK program.

Ride Leader

The Ride Leader will design, plan and lead day trips and overnight mountain bike excursions. Minimum tasks include:

- Assisting Program Coordinator in the development of ride schedule and communications with the community centres and youth agencies.
- Participating in all scheduled rides as a leader and facilitator
- Creating a safe, fun and enjoyable experience for all ride participants: includes motivating and instructing the youth on the trail, as well as preparing and facilitating games during breaks in the rides.
- Maintaining bikes, helmets and other equipment and ensuring they are all "ride ready" before the day of each ride.
- Assisting Project Coordinator in developing and implementing new program ideas, fundraising ideas and partnerships.
- Develop new fundraising initiatives and recruiting youth to help at TFKV fundraisers for the "earn-a-trip" program
- Recruiting and coordinating any ride volunteers

3. PRE-RIDE ADMINISTRATION

To be confident and prepared before each ride, and to help the youth agency prepare and understand the day's activities, a number of administrative details must be covered as early as possible! Attention to these items will reduce your chances of arriving at the trailhead to find a group of kids in flip-flops trying to ride bikes that don't fit them.

1. Send out a ride date confirmation letter to each centre one week in advance.
2. Ensure each centre has the waiver/emergency medical form, and that these will be distributed to each participant for parents/guardians to fill out well before the ride.
3. Ensure that the agency leader attending the ride knows what TFK will be bringing, what the participants should bring, and what clothing and equipment is appropriate.
4. Determine whether or not the centre has a 15-passenger vehicle, and who will be driving. If necessary, arrange to rent a passenger van.
5. Discuss needs of the centre: e.g. departure and return times, distance they can travel, ages/abilities of the kids (this helps to determine which trail to go to).
6. Arrange meeting place and time with the leader and fax a map to the trailhead if necessary. Make sure you have exchanged cell phone numbers with the leader.
7. Determine the number of youth/leaders attending the ride. Ask for the estimated ages and heights of the participants AND leaders, so you know what size bikes to bring.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

Be sure to assemble all of your risk management resources, understand the importance of each item, and keep copies in a safe and appropriate location before, during and after every ride. Risk management resources include:

1. IMBA Insurance Policy
2. Emergency Action Plan
3. Example Emergency Response Form
4. Minor Accident Report Form
5. Liability Wavier
6. Medical Information and Waiver
7. Photo and Filming Waiver
8. Trip Log
9. Your common sense and responsible decision making skills!

5. RIDE ORGANIZATION/ITINERARY

Congratulations! You've made it to the trailhead! The kids are in the van bouncing off the walls, the bikes are tightly packed in the trailer, lunches are made, water bottles filled, and you're wondering, "now what"??? After a couple of rides, you will certainly find your own style in facilitating the transition from van to trail. Here is a sample to help you on your way.

Remember that once the kids have their bikes, it is much more difficult to get their attention. So try to get through most of the information (bike fittings, braking, and gear shifting) before you distribute the bikes. Often the kids won't listen to you anyway - or if they do, they quickly forget what you have just told them. Be prepared to help them out on the trail, especially with gear shifting and braking. Try to make your communication interesting, interactive and fun!

Overview

1. Introduction
2. Name Game
3. Emotional and physical safety
4. Trail Etiquette
5. Bike Savvy
6. Bike Fittings
7. Bike/Equipment distribution
8. Sound off

Introduction

Briefly introduce yourself, let them know how excited you are to get on the trail but emphasise that cooperation and attention will help everyone get riding sooner. Very quickly review the next steps, so they know what they have to get through before they can start out on the trail.

Name Game

This is for YOU more than them as they are likely to know each other. Do your best to learn participants' names, both for safety and camaraderie. Quickly demonstrate that you are genuine by using names as soon as you learn them. Here's a sample game using one or two soft objects that can easily be tossed around a circle:

Participants form a circle. Each person says their first name, preceded by a positive word describing them that begins with the same letter as their first name. E.g. Smiley Susan.

Ride Leader selects a participant by saying their word and name (e.g. Smiley Susan), and tosses that person the object. The receiver thanks the person who threw the object (e.g. Cool Catherine), and selects a new receiver by saying their word and name (e.g. Jumping Jack). Jumping Jack thanks Cool Catherine, and passes the object to Fun Frank. Etc... Encourage eye contact between the thrower and receiver!

When it's working smoothly, introduce a second object and continue as appropriate.

Physical and emotional safety

While physical safety can be covered with some simple ground rules and common sense, emotional safety is also critical and requires a more subtle approach. Many of the participants commonly face intense criticism, lack positive role models, and try to hide their fears. TFK leaders are not counselors or social workers, but you need to be very sensitive and aware of participants needs. Practice a very supportive and subtle communication style/method to instill mutual respect and demonstrate empathy. Ask the participants to suggest guidelines for a safe ride, and make sure to draw out the following key points:

- a) Go at your own pace, but stay between the TFK leaders (one leader at the front that no one goes in front of, and one leader at the back that no one goes behind)
- b) Ride as a group; it's about supporting each other not racing each other.
- c) Use teamwork to help anyone who is having difficulty on the trail through motivation and sharing techniques.
- d) Let your friends and/or the ride leaders know if you are not comfortable with any of the activities during the day
- e) Stop and regroup at all trail junctions (requires emphasis)
- f) Don't forget sunscreen and hydration

Trail Etiquette

Emphasize that the trails are for everyone and must be shared respectfully with each other, with other users and of course with all the other creatures that call the forest home!

- a) Keep to the right
- b) Leave at least 1.5 bike lengths between you and the rider in front
- c) Pass with care
- d) Pull over (out of the way of other trail users!) to stop
- e) Ride, don't slide (no skidding)
- f) Stay ON the trail (prevents erosion of surrounding vegetation)
- g) Leave no trace

Bike Savvy

Demonstrate with 2 bikes (one with each kind of gear shifter). The demo is most effective when one leader sits on the bike to demonstrate technique/positioning while the other leader describes the technique.

Brakes

Left brake = front tire, right brake = rear tire. Emphasise smooth, even braking. Explain that when going downhill it's important to use the rear brake more than the front brake - it's always amusing to talk about an endo here. Discuss skidding: how to avoid and correct it. Plan ahead so you don't have to brake suddenly, and if you do start skidding then feather the brakes: slightly let off the brakes and when you have gained control, apply the brakes gently again. Note that using 2 fingers on the brake lever lets you maintain control.

Gears

Explain the different kinds of gear shifters: left shifter = front derailleur, right shifter = rear derailleur. Explain that the middle chainring in front is used most of the time, except for granny gear on steep climbs. Explain that the rear chain rings are for the more 'specific' gearing. Show them which way to shift for easier and harder, both front and back. Emphasise smooth shifting, always while pedaling without loading weight on the chain (the grinding sound

when you do shift while loading the chain sounds like a cash register at a bike store which is where it'll be going for repairs when you do this too much). If you shift when you've come to a stop, get off your bike, lift the rear tire and pedal your bike by hand until the gear has shifted.

Further 'subtleties' of technique can be discussed on the ride (things like effective hill climbing technique, etc).

Don't spend too much time on these details, as the kids will quickly learn by doing. Focus only on the important basics and make sure they understand the key points. Involve participants in the demonstrations by asking questions and prompting suggestions!

Bike Fitting

1. Crossbar: at least one inch between the body and the crossbar
2. Seat: the legs should be slightly bent when sitting on the seat with one leg resting on the pedal in the 6 o'clock position. Make sure it's secure.
3. Handlebars: arms slightly bent when sitting on the seat with hands on the bars. Ensure that the arms are not locked into position, and that each youth can reach their brakes.
4. ABCD: Air, brakes,
5. Ensure that all quick release levers are secure

Bike Distribution

1. Participants line up in order of height
2. Distribute helmets, ensuring proper fit
3. Distribute water bottles and camelbacks
4. Distribute gloves if they would like them
5. Distribute bikes and then start adjusting to fit

Sound off

When all participants are standing in a line or a circle with their bikes, start with #1 (the TFK leader who will be at the front during the day) and follow through so that each participant counts off in order and yells their number out loud. The last person will be the second TFK leader who will be at the end of the pack during the day. Practice so that everyone remembers his or her number, and try a "sound-off" early in the ride. Anytime you need to ensure all participants are present, a leader says "sound-off", and each participant says their number, in order.

6. PRE-TRIP GEAR CHECKLIST

Make sure you have everything you need for the program coordinator, the ride leader, and all the participants. Check your list the day **BEFORE** the trip:

1. Bikes for kids + ride leaders (confirm sizes with agency)
2. Helmets for each participant + ride leaders
3. Your own bikes and helmets
4. Cell phone + agency contact information
5. Completed waivers for each participant (or conformation that they are ready to be collected before the ride begins)
6. A complete toolkit including at least:
 - a. 2 of each 4,5,6 mm Allen keys
 - b. Crescent wrench
 - c. Pedal wrench
 - d. Chain tool
 - e. Chain lube
 - f. Rags
 - g. Screwdriver
7. Tire repair kit including:
 - a. Tire irons
 - b. Two new tubes
 - c. Two patch kits
 - d. Floor pump
 - e. Portable pump
 - f. Two 1st Aid Kits
8. Two full camelbacks
9. Lunches and Clif bars for every rider
10. Full, clean waterbottles for each bike
11. Sunscreen
12. Participant and agency staff evaluation forms

7. POST RIDE FOLLOW-UP

Now that you're back at the garage, it's tempting to ditch the trailer and run! But the more time you spend now, the less rushed you'll be the morning of your next ride, so take the time to put things away properly, organize yourself and think ahead to the next trip. Here are some things that should/must be done before ending the day.

1. Fill out the trip log, payroll (hours), and work journal.
2. Do a quick bike check and make a note of any bikes that need maintenance.
3. Empty/clean/refill waterbottles and camelbacks.
4. Attend to any administration that needs done for the next ride (waivers, meeting time/place, number/heights of kids and leaders, etc).
5. Make sure both garage doors are locked!!

8. OVERNIGHT TRIPS

Overview

Community centres and agencies that can provide camping gear may sign up for overnight rides. These trips typically run for three days and two nights. All participants and leaders camp at Nairn Falls Provincial Park, near Pemberton. During the three days, Trips for Kids arranges two rides and one trail maintenance workshop. The agency leaders should arrange additional activities as appropriate, although TFK leaders are normally expected to participate. TFK provides lunch on the first day, and Clif Bars all three days. Other meals are covered by the agency.

Properly executed overnight trips can be the highlight of a summer for leader and participants. From Trips for Kids' perspective, the key is to stay involved throughout while ensuring that agency representatives take responsibility for non-ride activities. Your role is to do an awesome job organising and facilitating the ride-related aspects of the trip. As a TFK leader, you can help with non-ride activities by becoming familiar with the communities of Whistler and Pemberton. Then you can assist agency representatives to plan appropriate activities and you won't be left hanging around the campsite watching kids throw rocks at their neighbours.

Groups with sufficient resources may wish to visit the Meadow Park Sports Centre in Whistler, or simply take a walk through the village. The Pemberton High School has playing fields that are great for soccer, frisbee, bike skills clinics, etc... There is a nice short walk to Nairn Falls from the campsite. One Mile Lake or Mosquito Lake near Pemberton are great for swimming, but only if one of the agency leaders is a certified lifeguard and has permission. DO NOT even think about suggesting swimming to the kids. Leave this decision up to the agency!!!

Trail Maintenance Workshops

TFK overnight trips are designed to provide a more comprehensive introduction to mountain biking and a more intensive outdoor experience. Trail maintenance workshops respond to both of these objectives. The basic format is:

1. Work with Robbie Stevens or another member of the cycling community to select an existing trail that is overgrown or otherwise in need of attention. The best sites offer a combination of pruning, raking, digging, rockwork, debris removal, etc... If you spend three hours clipping slide alder, it's not too rewarding. Arrange to get the WORCA tools (loppers, pick-axes, shovels, and handsaws). Usually they can be left for you to pick up from one of the local bike shops.
2. Arrive early and visit the trail on the first morning of the trip (before meeting the group) to locate appropriate parking, decide on a work strategy and flag where necessary. Think ahead and make a plan to work in teams (4 teams = 1 adult per team), spread out along the trail, hopefully assigning discrete tasks or trail sections to each small group. Consider timing. Do not expect the kids to last for more than 3 hours, and plan at least two breaks during this time.
3. When you meet the group at the trailhead, give them brief overview of the work they are about to undertake. It is absolutely critical for TFK staff to approach this activity with energy, enthusiasm and commitment. As always, be fun and positive. But make sure that the kids AND the agency reps understand that this is not just a way to pass the time - it's a key element in the mountain biking experience and deserves everyone's best effort. Explain why it's important, how hard it will be, how much the local bike community appreciates their work, etc...

4. Demonstrate the use of the different types of tools. Review the plan, break into teams, and give everyone a pair of gloves. Distribute the tools so each team has at least one shovel, one pick-axe and one set of loppers.
5. Get to work! You need to be in hyper-action mode to make sure everyone knows what to do, keeps busy without getting overtired or dehydrated, learns how to use the tools effectively, understands what the finished trail should look like, etc... Resist the temptation to do all the work yourself! Remember that you are supervising and guiding the work of others.
6. Celebrate. Hopefully you will have accomplished your trail maintenance tasks before everyone collapses and refuses to continue. In any case, round everyone up for a pep talk, wander back to the trucks with a glide in your stride, and give lots of praise and thanks for all the hard work. Remind everyone to look for any stray tools, gloves or garbage! Regroup, indulge in shameless self-congratulation, and you're ready to head back to the campsite. Return the tools en route.

Here is a sample itinerary for an overnight trip:

Day 1

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 12 - 2 pm | Meet at Nairn Falls campsite
Set up tents
Review itinerary and expectations
TFK provides lunch |
| 2 - 5 pm | Trail maintenance workshop |
| 5 - 6 pm | Relax
Soccer or other games
Explore campsite and trails |
| 6 - 8 pm | Dinner |
| 8 - 10 pm | Free |

Day 2

- | | |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| 8 - 10 am | Breakfast etc. |
| 10 - 4 | Ride in Pemberton |
| 4 - 8 | Games
Visit to Whistler
Dinner |
| 8 - 10 | Free |

Day 3

- | | |
|--------|-------------------------------|
| 8 - 10 | Breakfast
Pack up campsite |
| 10 - 1 | Ride in Whistler |
| 1 - 2 | Lunch |
| 2 pm | Return to Vancouver |