

AUCKLAND FOUR WHEEL DRIVE CLUB,
INC.

TRIP LEADER GUIDELINES

2007

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Auckland

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to assist members of the Auckland Four Wheel Drive Club, Inc (“the Club”) to become confident Trip Leaders.

To ensure the aims and objectives of the Club are upheld in accordance with the Club constitution and rules.

It is not intended for commercial training.

1.1 SKILLS & ATTRIBUTES OF A TRIP LEADER

The Committee determines the minimum skills and attributes required of a club member to be considered as a suitable and responsible Trip Leader. A competent four wheel driver does not necessarily make a good Trip Leader. Trip Leaders should always review club rules / regulations / by-laws.

The Club intends to run training sessions, where experienced Trip Leaders will advise new potential Trip Leaders how to run trips. It would also be advisable that a potential Trip Leader has attended a minimum number of club trips.

1.2 THE TRIP LEADER PRE-REQUISITES

The Trip Leader pre-requisites include:

- Ability to organise and a sense of responsibility
- Effective communication skills and ability to demonstrate authority
- Knowledge of radio communications as per club policy
- Map reading skills - desirable
- GPS skills to be used in conjunction with the relevant maps - desirable
- Minimum four wheel drive experience as per club policy requirements
- Knowledge of convoy procedures and ability to organise the placement of vehicles in a convoy

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- Responsibility for recovery situations or ability to delegate a suitable person(s)
- Trip preparation skills - as per Planning The Trip (Section 2.1)
- Knowledge of or research done on the area proposed for the trip
- Appropriate driving experience for the selected tracks
- An understanding of the track classification system
- The ability to assign an appropriate Trip Rating
- Ability to select and nominate an appropriate Tail End Charlie* (TEC) and Ground Charlie*

The Trip Leader has responsibility for the safe running of the trip.

It is the Trip Leader's responsibility to counsel prospective participants regarding their competency and the trip standard, both before and during the trip.

The Trip Leader has at all times, the absolute discretion to make the final judgment to determine the suitability of vehicles or equipment proposed to be used. Furthermore, the Trip Leader has the discretion to accept or reject any person's participation. This specifically includes drivers and passengers, whether before or after the commencement of the trip. This should be done in accordance with the relevant club bylaws / regulations / policy.

1.3 TRIP PARTICIPANTS

All participants on a trip are responsible for their own vehicles and the actions that they take. Some trips may have strict limits on convoy numbers. Adequate pre-trip preparation should be undertaken and as a minimum, participants should:

- Register for the trip with the Club Trip Coordinator or Trip Leader.
- Maintain their vehicle in a roadworthy condition and tyres must have suitable tread for the conditions anticipated.

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- For longer range trips it is advisable to have a pre-trip vehicle inspection carried out by a reputable 4WD specialist.
- Ensure that their vehicle has front and rear recovery points fitted (Appendix D). If not fitted as standard, they need to be installed by a competent fitter, and must be safe for use in a recovery situation. Manufacturers tie-down loops are not suitable for recovery purposes.
- Carry suitable fire extinguisher (total of 2kg for forest trips).
- Carry adequate personal supplies of fuel, food, water and clothing for the trip.
- Carry the appropriate recovery equipment. (Appendix D)
- Obey the instructions of the Trip Leader at all times.
- Do not leave the trip without the Trip Leader's knowledge and agreement.

Trip participants should have the following training / skills:

- Essential
 - Minimum four wheel drive experience, in accordance with the advertised trip requirements and club policy requirements.
- Preferred
 - Current First Aid Certificate as appropriate for the trip.
 - Bush mechanic skills.

* Tail End Charlie (TEC) and Ground Charlie..... the TEC is the last person/vehicle in a convoy.

Definition – Ground Charlie is a person who is contactable at all times (at home or base camp) and who can contact emergency services and / or emergency contacts when and if required.

2. TRIP LEADER'S GUIDELINES

2.1 PLANNING THE TRIP

Before setting out on a trip, it is important that some basic planning is completed to ensure that the event is conducted in such a way to ensure that it is both enjoyable and safe for everyone. Selection of the route is the most important consideration. The Trip Leader should endeavour to be conversant with factors such as hazards, points of interest, campsites and expected weather conditions etc. Consideration should be given to the following:

- **Type** - determine the trip type (e.g., day trip, week-end, multi day).
- **Destination** - determine the destination and / or areas to be travelled.
- **Duration** - determine the trip duration and likely stopovers.
- **Route** - plan route (tracks) to include alternate routes in case of adverse conditions.
- **Trip Rating** – rate the trip to the highest expected standard and be prepared en-route to make changes to suit weather or track conditions. It should be noted that four wheel driving is unpredictable by its very nature and variation from the expected degree of difficulty is very possible.

On most four wheel drive trips, participants can expect that a variety of tracks will be traversed, each with an appropriate rating. Trip Leaders should advise participants of the range of track ratings expected to be encountered on the planned route. Contact other members as to degree of difficulty of intended route. The following ratings should be used as a guide:

- **Scenic/Social** – Sealed roads and some good unsealed roads or tracks. No four wheel driving experience required. Road tyres are acceptable.
- **Easy** – Little or no four wheel driving experience required. All terrain tyres, front and rear recovery points at Trip Leader's discretion.

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- **Medium** – Low range may be needed with a snatch strap recovery possible. All terrain tyres or better. Front and rear recovery points (rated), basic recovery gear (snatch strap, 2 rated shackles and gloves), and appropriate driver knowledge.
- **Hard** – Steep terrain or rutted tracks. Snatch strap and / or winching recovery may be required. All terrain tyres acceptable, mud terrain tyres preferred, road tires are not acceptable. Front and rear recovery points (rated), basic recovery gear (snatch strap, 2 rated shackles and gloves), and appropriate driver knowledge. Winch and full recovery gear is preferred. Appendix D.
- **Extreme** – Very steep, deeply rutted tracks or rock hopping will be encountered. Front and rear recovery points (rated), full recovery gear (snatch strap, rated shackles, tree trunk protector, winch extension, drag chain and gloves), and appropriate driver knowledge. Winching will be expected and an electric or motorised winch is compulsory on all vehicles. Mud terrain or Simex style tyres essential. Warning: Vehicle damage may occur.

The following should also be used as a guide while planning the trip:

- **Participants** – decide on the number of vehicles and the number of participants appropriate for the nature of the trip. It is recommended that no more than 30 participants are included on four-wheel drive trips. This is primarily an environmental issue and for groups larger than 30, then extra consideration should be given to minimise the environmental impact of the group at rest areas, camping grounds and during vehicle recoveries.
- **Equipment** – assess if any special equipment will be required (e.g., snow chains, hand winch, chain saw, appropriate first aid kit, etc). A fire extinguisher should be installed in every vehicle in a visible and easily accessible location (a total of 2kg minimum for forest trips). Also obtain the club emergency kit.
- **Vehicle Requirements** – depending on trip duration and location(s), you may need to remind vehicle owners of their responsibility to ensure their vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately set up for the trip.

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- **Permits** – check if permits are required for the area or areas that you may pass through. Forestry companies require a Health and Safety Plan. Obtain a copy of the Club's plan. They may also require a risk control hazard list. Appendix F.
- **Maps** – obtain relevant and current maps of the areas to be visited.
- **Season** – decide on the time of year to run the trip.
- **Activities** – consider other activities which may be included in the trip.
- **Research** – Gather information about the area to be visited, maps, books, contact other club members and relevant authorities.
- **Supplies** – consider, fuel, food, water, clothing, camping requirements, accommodation.
- **Convoy Communications** – determine minimum radio requirements for the trip.
- **Emergency Communications** – determine the communications necessary in an emergency situation. It is important to be aware of areas where normal communication equipment (mobile phones) will not operate, so the need for specialist equipment (e.g. EPIRB, etc.) should be carried. These are included in the Club kit.
- **Ground Charlie** – select your base contact person (Ground Charlie), provide them with your trip details including Emergency Plans, Trip Participant List, Personal Details Forms and Temporary Member / Visitor Forms. Report to the Ground Charlie on an agreed timeframe. Reporting method will vary depending on length of trip and destination. Stick to a pre-arranged schedule.
- **Emergency Plans** – develop an emergency plan in response to potential incidents, such as bush fires, personal injury, mechanical or vehicle damage, alternative routes, Total Fire Bans, etc. Include emergency requirements for food, water and clothing as appropriate for the type of the trip. A copy of the Emergency Plan shall also be provided to the Tail End Charlie (TEC) at the start of the trip and Ground Charlie before the trip.

2.2 ADVERTISING THE TRIP

- Trip details have to be advertised to all members prior to the trip - preferably in the Club newsletter / magazine or by e-mail. For the Public Liability Insurance reasons, it is necessary to prove it is a club event. The current insurance policy does not cover impromptu trips run by club members.
- The Trip / Social Coordinator needs to mention proposed trips at club (monthly) meetings so that they are recorded in the club minutes.
- Club trips must be promoted within the club and available to all members. As a guide when a trip is advertised it should have a minimum of two vacancies.
- The minimum advertising details for a trip shall include but not limited to:
 - **Dates / Duration** – nominate dates, commencement time and duration of trip.
 - **Destination(s)** – state the meeting point, destination(s) and approximate distance to be travelled from start to finish (this may be stated when participants phone to book trip).
 - **Trip Rating** – advise overall Trip Rating as determined during the trip planning.
 - **Equipment** – list minimum equipment requirements for the trip in accordance with trip rating. Each Trip Leader shall determine the minimum requirements.
 - **Vehicle numbers** – state minimum number of vehicles (suggested maximum 10 vehicles per group). Each Trip Leader to determine the limits. Public Liability Insurance requirements also need to be considered.
 - **Vehicle requirements** – state minimum vehicle requirements including communications, accessories and relevant vehicle spares. Remind vehicle owners of their responsibility to ensure their vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately set up for the trip **or they may be refused on the day.**
 - **Recovery Gear** – state minimum recovery gear required for the trip (this is covered by normal Club requirements as published in the Club magazine). See Appendix D.

- **Provisions** – state the suggested provisions required for trip including, food, water, fuel, clothing, medication etc.

2.3 DOCUMENTATION / PAPERWORK

Appendix E, contains all required forms, however not all forms need to be completed on every trip. Details on each of the forms are as follows:

- **Trip Participant List** – compulsory form – all details must be provided on every trip including visitors and temporary members.
- **Temporary Member / Visitor** – compulsory form – temporary member or visitor status shall be in accordance with Club Rules / By-laws. A club fee applies. Form must be completed, signed and handed over to the Trip Leader. This is to protect the club Public Liability Insurances.
- **Personal Details Form** – recommended – this form includes medical and personal details, which should be completed and signed by all participants. The form should be placed in a sealed envelope and placed in the participant's vehicle glove box.
- **Trip Incident Report** – details need to be recorded for potential insurance purposes.
- **Accident Report** – details of any vehicle(s) or property damage accident need to be recorded.
- **Emergency Plans** – refer checklist provided.

2.4 RUNNING THE TRIP

The following activities and tasks should be carried out:

- **Take bookings** – Be available (or arrange alternative person) to take bookings in the week prior to the trip. Club policy is that trip needs to be booked no later than the Thursday evening prior to the trip. Be prepared to be flexible if trip numbers are low.
- **Meeting points** – state the meeting point, time and trip fee.
- **At meeting point** – Verify participants and collect fee (if possible arrange for someone to do this as you will be busy).

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- **Equipment Check** – Check that hooks or other recovery points are fitted and secure and that fire extinguisher and other compulsory equipment is being carried. Appendix D.
- **Briefing(s)** – provide trip briefing(s) and state the planned daily activities.
- **Head count** – confirm head count before, during and immediately following the trip.
- **Trip report** – nominate person(s) to complete trip report(s).
- **Weather** – check weather reports prior to trip and if possible, every day on a multi-day trip.
- **First aid** – identify a first-aider in the group and / or location of first aid kit(s) and the club safety kits.
- **Convoy order** – determine convoy order and appoint a Tail End Charlie (TEC).
- **Tail End Charlie** – the TEC has the responsibility for keeping the trip leader informed of the progress or delays of the group and for ensuring that gates are left open or closed as found by lead driver. On trips with multiple gates it is advisable to use the second vehicle in convoy to close gate and re-join in front of the TEC. That way most participants share the job and not just the TEC.
- **Convoy procedures** – explain convoy procedures and the need to stay together as per club Rules / By-laws. Refer Appendix B.
- **Communication** – decide on radio channel and do a radio check before departing.
- **Ground Charlie** – contact Ground Charlie as agreed (if applicable).
- **Tread lightly** – look after the environment and leave nothing but footprints.
- **Code of ethics** – remind participants about the code of ethics (Refer Appendix C).
- **Breaks** – make sure you provide adequate toilet breaks, coffee breaks etc.
- **Setting camp** – make sure you stop and set up camp well before sun set. Happy hour is a good idea and gets the group to mix and socialise.

- **Leaving trip early** – when it is agreed between the Trip Leader and a participant that they will depart the trip prior to completion, the departing driver should confirm a safe exit route with the Trip Leader.

The Trip Leader should advise Ground Charlie of the participant's departure at the earliest opportunity, being at least the next pre-arranged communication time. It is not desirable for a single vehicle to travel in the bush off-road. Where possible assign one or more vehicles, preferably with experienced drivers to assist.

On a trip not intended to be an overnight event, the leader should identify a time to turn back.

2.5 ENDING THE TRIP

It is important to have a definite end point or "point of no return".

- **End point** – select a location during the planning stages but it may vary according to prevailing conditions.
- **Announcement** – make an announcement that it is the end of the trip, have a head count. If the head count is short and you have not been informed of an early departure try to find out from others participants as to the reason.
- **Getting home** – provide instructions on how to get back to a known point / road or even home.
- **Trip reports** – confirm person(s) writing trip report(s).
- **Ground Charlie** – notify Ground Charlie (if applicable).
- **Paperwork** – complete the relevant paperwork - reports etc.

2.6 AFTER THE TRIP

- If you have someone missing, attempt to contact using contact number provided and check for their safe arrival home.
- Return Club or any other equipment borrowed or on loan.

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- Hand in paperwork (forms) to the Club Trip Coordinator, or other designated person(s).
- Ensure the trip report is submitted for club magazine by required date.
- Clean vehicle and equipment after each trip and between eco-sensitive areas.
- Start thinking about planning the next trip.

APPENDIX A – DRIVER BRIEFING

- Welcome members and visitors.
- Explain expected track conditions.
- Advise your procedure for disabled or malfunctioning vehicles. The recommendation is to not take potential problems.
- Outline the protocol for determining when to turn back and the need to respect that call.
- Explain Convoy rules (keep vehicle behind in sight, stop at any turn or track branch if vehicle behind is not in sight).
- At obstacles or steep hills allow the vehicle in front to clear before attempting obstacle.
- Wait after an obstacle in case the following vehicle has difficulties.
- Radio channel for both CB and PRS. Keep unnecessary chatter to a minimum.
- Let leader know if you need a stop or have problems. If radio is not working, flash lights to vehicle in front.
- In the event of a recovery, one person to be in control.
- No shackles to be used to connect ropes. Experienced member will show how to join using a wooden block. Never use a tow ball for any recovery.
- Drivers to take responsibility for their own vehicle. The trip leader /club members will not be responsible for vehicle damage or injury (emphasise).
- If in doubt stop and look, ask for help or alternatives.
- Do not leave without informing the leader.
- Seat belts to be worn and fastened at all times in a moving vehicle.
- Fire risk - no smoking outside vehicle in forests, stub butts out and keep inside vehicle.
- Take your rubbish home.
- No alcohol to be consumed on trip.
- Explain gate procedure. All gates to be left as found. With multiple gates use second in line to close and re-join in front of Tail End Charlie. This may not be practical if you need to keep vehicles in a strict order.
- Introduce Tail End Charlie.
- Lights on in forest if required by conditions of use.
- Any questions?
- Have a good day.

APPENDIX B – CONVOY PROCEDURES

- **Start** - At the start of the trip, the Trip Leader shall arrange the convoy order and nominate a vehicle to be last in the convoy (Tail End Charlie).

All vehicles shall stay in the convoy order unless directed otherwise by the Trip Leader.

- **Communications** - Convoy communication shall be the designated CB Radio and / or UHF Radio channel selected.

If you are unable to make radio contact, flash your headlights onto the vehicle ahead. This is a signal for the rest of the convoy to stop.

Keep unnecessary chatter on the radio to a minimum when navigating difficult areas.

If in any doubt of the best / safest way to proceed through hazards / obstacles, ask the Trip Leader or more experienced driver for advice. Remember you probably will not be the only one experiencing difficulty.

Acknowledge all radio calls from the Trip Leader.

- **Traveling**- Keep the vehicle behind you in view at all times and at any decision point (corner, deviation, obstacle):
 - *Wait for the following vehicle*
 - *Indicate where to go (use indicators if appropriate)*
 - *When acknowledgment is received, then proceed*

Drive at your COMFORTABLE and SAFE speed. Generally keep 4-6 vehicle lengths distance between vehicles and keep the convoy moving.

On steep inclines / obstacles - Proceed one vehicle at a time

On very steep or difficult terrain - Call the next vehicle through when you are clear

All gates are to be left as they were found. The Trip Leader is responsible to ensure that the last vehicle knows to leave the gate open or closed.

Vehicles should not leave the convoy other than in exceptional circumstances and before doing so must obtain approval from the Trip Leader.

Remember you are responsible for the vehicle behind you!

- **Code of Ethics** - At all times abide by road rules and regulations and drive in a manner consistent with the Four Wheel Driver's Code of Ethics.

APPENDIX C - FOUR WHEEL DRIVERS' CODE OF ETHICS

- Obey the laws and regulations for Recreational Vehicles that apply to public lands.
- Respect the cultural, heritage and environmental values of public / private land by obeying restrictions that may apply.
- Respect our flora and fauna. Stop and look but never disturb.
- Keep to formed vehicle tracks.
- Keep the environment clean. Carry your own and any other rubbish out.
- Keep your vehicle mechanically sound and clean to reduce the environmental impact.
- Adopt minimal impact camping and driving practices.
- Seek permission before driving on private land. Do not disturb livestock or watering points, leave gates as found.
- Take adequate water, food, fuel, basic spares and a first aid kit on trips. In remote areas travel with another vehicle and have appropriate communications.
- Enjoy your recreation and respect the rights of others.
- Plan ahead and lodge trip details with a responsible person.
- Support four-wheel drive touring as a responsible and legitimate family recreational activity.
- Report inappropriate behaviour.

THIS CODE IS VALUABLE, ONLY IF YOU OBSERVE IT.

APPENDIX D - MINIMUM EQUIPMENT

Compulsory

- Fire Extinguisher (a total minimum of 2kg for forest trips). Extinguishers must be operable and have current certification.
- Tow hooks front and rear, fixed with two 12 mm (or larger) bolts grade 8.8 or imperial equivalent.
- First aid kit
- Spade
- Snatch strap or Nylon rope

Preferred but not compulsory

- Radio, CB/PRS
- Gloves
- Basic tool kit
- Vehicle jack and wooden foot plate
- Second snatch strap
- Wooden block for joining straps/ropes
- Two shackles 3 tonne rated
- Winch
- Pulley block (snatch block)
- Winch extension strap or cable

APPENDIX E - TRIP FORMS & DOCUMENTATION

- Trip Participant List
- Trip Incident Report
- Accident Report Form

APPENDIX F - EXAMPLE POTENTIAL HAZARD

Potential hazards include, but are not limited to:

- Other Forest users
 - *Oncoming traffic*
 - *Hunters*
 - *Horses*
 - *Dogs*
 - *Cattle*
- Weather
 - *Some areas will be slippery*
 - *Puddles may be deep*
 - *Affect visibility, lights to be on at all times*
 - *Cold. Be aware of hypothermia.*
- Trees
 - *Falling branches.*
 - *Falling pine cones (especially in windy weather)*
- Tracks
 - *Deep ruts*
 - *Heavy mud*
- Fire
 - *No smoking outside vehicle*
 - *Used butts and spent matches retained inside vehicle*

APPENDIX G – TRIP INCIDENT REPORT

This form is required to record any ‘reportable incident’ occurring during the trip. An incident can involve the Club group or the general public. Examples of ‘reportable incidents’ are: bodily injury, sexual harassment, any personal grievance, racial discrimination or property damage to vehicles or private property.

DATE & TIME OF REPORT: _____

SUBMITTED BY: _____ MEMBER NO: _____

CONTACT DETAILS (If not a Club member): _____

DATE OF INCIDENT: _____

LOCATION: _____

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT:

WITNESS NAMES & ADDRESSES

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

WITNESS STATEMENTS:

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

APPENDIX H – EMERGENCY PLANS CHECKLIST

In planning a trip it is important to recognise that you are expected to return home on an appropriate date or time or to arrive at a particular destination when you say you will. There are always other external parties that are affected by where we go and to this end it is important for all participants to know whom to contact for information when things go wrong or emergency contact is required to a trip participant.

NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS OF EXTERNAL PERSON (Ground Charlie)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TEL: (Work) _____ (After Hours): _____

TRIP ROUTE – what tracks will the trip use. Where appropriate, provide marked-up maps.

EVACUATION POINTS - list helipads and other areas, such as open areas or grounds.

CONTACT DETAILS

POLICE – list major town police station number: _____

PARK RANGER/LAND MANAGER: _____

PRIVATE LAND OWNER NAME AND PHONE No: _____

COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

Is area covered by mobile phone network? YES / NO

Do I need a sat phone? YES / NO

Do I have access to an HF radio? YES / NO

In remote areas, what time will I call Ground Charlie? _____ am/pm

How can external contact get messages to me? _____

What strategy do I have if I do not contact the external contact? _____

