

# Denver Safety & Leadership Newsletter



*A Communication for CMC Denver Leaders*

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## New Leaders

Congratulations to **Robert Legrand**, who successfully completed all training requirements to become a Denver trip leader.

## Wilderness First Aid Leader Training Update

If you haven't done so, please read the August 20 email from CMC's Emily Bresko about the procedures for maintaining leader certification under the new statewide WFA Hybrid training program conducted by Backcountry Pulse, including Covid-related extensions.

See: <https://d2mxsvdlyuhqy.cloudfront.net/mailling/150aee/72a10bd71d2ad8f99c9d305f0d0a09ef?format=pdf&ch=5000&cw=3900>.

## Avalanche Leader Training Update

**ATA Requirement May Be Eliminated for Some Trip Leaders.** The State CMC Board has decided that ATA certification is **no longer** required for leaders scheduling and traveling in non-remote areas **specifically limited to** Open Space Parks, State Parks, and Urban trails, although individual CMC groups may adopt more restrictive standards for their leaders. **Non-remote areas**, as defined by the Emergency Care and Safety Institute (ECSI) **means areas within one hour of definitive medical care.** "Definitive medical care" is defined as advanced medical care at the level of EMS or greater.

If Denver Group adopts the above policy, Denver trip leaders who lead trips ONLY in **non-avalanche prone** areas as **defined above** during winter months (Nov. 1 to April 30) **will no longer be required** to take the Avalanche Terrain Avoidance (ATA) course. **Voice your opinion below.**

**ATA and AIARE Refreshers may no longer be required.** Currently, Denver trip leaders who lead trips in **any** non-avalanche prone areas during winter months are required to retake the one-day Avalanche Terrain Avoidance (ATA) course every three years. Leaders who wish to lead trips in avalanche prone terrain are required to recertify in the AIARE Level 1 course every five years. Since neither the American Avalanche Association or the American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education require recertification, the CMC State Board will follow their lead, although again, individual CMC groups may adopt more restrictive standards for their leaders.

If Denver Group adopts this new policy, then Denver Group trip leaders will not need to “re-qualify” periodically by repeating ATA or AIARE every few years. **Voice your opinion below.**

**Questions for all Denver Trip Leaders:** Denver DS&L welcomes your views on whether Denver Group should follow the new state-wide policies and ...

1) no longer require ATA at all for trip leaders who lead winter trips only in non-remote areas as defined above?

and/or

2) retain or drop our current recertification standards for all ATA and AIARE graduates as a condition of keeping their graduate status?

**To voice your opinion, please contact DS&L Chairman Kevin Schaal at [schaalk@msn.com](mailto:schaalk@msn.com).**

## Should You Exercise Outdoors When Air Quality is Poor?

Get some expert advice in this excellent story by the Colorado Sun’s Jennifer Brown.  
<https://coloradosun.com/2020/08/25/wildfire-smoke-and-coronavirus-colorado/>

## Dog Etiquette on the Trail

Outside of beer, there is no better social lubricant than a friendly dog (*for MOST people*). But even a friendly unleashed dog can cause problems on the trail for hikers, bikers, horses, plants, and wildlife.

And sometimes you may encounter a dog that is not trail-worthy. That happened last year to a Denver leader who politely asked its owner to short-leash his dog before he passed them on the trail. As he



went by, the dog lunged at him and he reflexively raised his hiking poles to defend himself. The owner got very irate and shoved the leader, saying “It’s your word against mine” if he reported it to the ranger. (The leader did report it, but no action was taken).

Responsible dog owners take their dogs hiking in designated areas only and always keep their dogs on leash and on the trail, stepping off the trail with their leashed dog to let others pass safely. Here are some commonsense tips for dog owners and hikers gleaned from outdoor websites.

### For dog owners:



- Abide by the local leash regulations. A leash-yanking dog is not yet ready for trail encounters with humans and other dogs. Choose a non-retractable leash to avoid trouble.
- If a dog is very protective and aggressive, it is not fit for hiking. Never allow your dog to lunge at hikers, bikers, horses, or other dogs.
- In areas where it’s allowed, an off-leash hiking dog must be well-socialized, highly responsive to owner commands, and kept close by. If your dog likes to chase animals, it will disturb wildlife. And an encounter with a moose or a rattlesnake will not end well. (see below)
- Chasing bikers or trail runners can result in serious injuries, medical claims, and lawsuits. Consider the perspective of approaching trail users, who may be confronted with an onrushing dog. If they’ve had a previous bad experience, should they take your “Don’t worry, he’s friendly!” at face value?
- Yield the trail right of way to others.
- If another dog owner interposes her body between her dog and yours, it’s a pretty good sign her dog isn’t friendly, or she doesn’t want them to meet.
- Pack out your doggy do. Leave-no-trace applies to dogs too. And don’t expect someone else to pick up the bag you left trailside. Doesn’t everyone hate seeing those bags?
- In the event your dog bites someone, be sure to exchange vaccination information so the victim can avoid rabies shots.

### For hikers:

- The vast majority of dogs you encounter will be friendly. But don’t assume you can pet them. Ask the owner first and offer your hand for a sniff, palm up. These days, a dog may react unpredictably to a masked stranger. And owners may be less comfortable with you touching their dog. (Dogs have been known to contract Covid and it’s not clear if they can transmit it via their fur if an infected person pets them.)
- If you are concerned about an approaching dog, stop and ask the owner to get the dog under control.
- If the dog is not under anyone’s control and is acting aggressively, use your pack as a shield and shout “NO.” While some dogs may growl or bare their teeth, dog trainers say that stillness can be a more reliable signal of imminent attack – head slightly lowered, body tensed, eyes staring.



- If you have hiking poles, cross them and if necessary, use them to push the dog away. Be prepared to hit the dog with a hiking pole or stick if it attacks another person.
- Avoid direct eye contact or baring your teeth, which the dog may interpret as sign of aggression, but don't cower or turn your back on the dog. Slowly back away.

On rare occasions in the wilderness, you may encounter a pack of dogs that were lost or turned loose by their owners. If you are hiking or backpacking with a group, that shouldn't be a problem, but it could be a terrifying experience for a lone hiker. One highly experienced CMC leader reports that he was forced to retreat into a narrow rock passage and fend off several dogs with his poles and pack until the dogs lost interest and ran away.

Notes:

This is about you and your dog's safety as well as not harassing wildlife. Over a four-year period, CO Parks and Wildlife reported 15 moose/human conflicts. In all but two the conflict was started by a dog: <https://www.theheraldtimes.com/beware-of-moose-conflicts-can-cause-serious-injuries/rio-blanco-county/>

Here is a recent Q/A advice article sent to new members and posted at cmcdenver.org: <https://www.cmcdenver.org/wp-content/uploads/Doggy-Hikes.pdf>

## Hunting Season is Approaching



Hunting soon will take place in almost every area CMC hikes throughout the state, so get to know about the planning resources you need to avoid hunters.

Most hunting takes place in September and October, although some eastern plains hunting is allowed in late August through December. All dates are posted at Colorado Parks and Wildlife's very useful *Big Game Hunting Planner* at: <https://cpw.state.co.us/Documents/Hunting/HunterEd/HuntPlanner.pdf#search=hunting%20planner>

However, as a hiker or backpacker, you want to know more about the places there will be NO hunting while you are visiting there. For up-to-date information, call the friendly folks at the Hunter Outreach Line: 303-291-7526 or write to them at [hunteroutreach@state.co.us](mailto:hunteroutreach@state.co.us). They may steer you away from your intended area and suggest another area nearby where hunting is prohibited. We suggest adding these contacts to your phone contact list for handy reference. Nothing like driving a group to a TH and finding a "Hunting Here Today" sign!



**By the way**, always wear or attach to your pack hunter pink or hunter orange fabric during hunting season. This includes every member of your group **and all dogs**.

## Basic Leader First Aid Kits: What's in Yours?

By David Ruscitto

What should be in your first aid kit? Everybody seems to have a slightly different take. It is good to start by remembering why we carry medical gear in the first place. Our goal is to relieve pain, prevent further injury and reduce the chances of infection. Treating medical problems properly in the field and facilitating an evacuation if needed will accomplish this goal.



Some would say that if you have what is needed in any emergency then you packed appropriately. Of course, this could mean carrying a 5-pound first aid kit and that's not practical either. Rather than planning for every eventuality; it is suggested you plan for the most likely situations, recognizing that not every first aid situation is an emergency. What you carry also depends on your level of training and the makeup of your group and the trip.



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**What is your level of training and experience in wilderness first aid?** Only carry items that you are confident in using. For example, don't carry a tourniquet if you don't know how to use it. Improper use of medical equipment can make a situation worse rather than better.

**What is the size of the group and how long will you be in the backcountry?** The larger the group the more the supplies can be pooled, reducing individual loads. For example, not everybody needs to carry a padded splint, two Ace bandages, and two cravats. Splinting materials tend to be the bulkiest items in your kit. A couple of each item for the group could be sufficient. In large groups, specialty items such as tourniquets may be carried by the more qualified individuals. The deeper in the backcountry, the longer you may need to care for an injured or ill party. For example, on a backpacking trip, a wound may need to be cleaned and the dressing changed several times as you hike out.

**What injuries are you likely to experience?** The EMS/SAR community and the CMC have some data on the most common first aid events. Typical backcountry injuries include:

- Sprains, strains, dislocations, and fractures
- Wounds such as burns, blisters, splinters, lacerations, abrasions, stings, bites, and frostbite.

In addition to injuries, there is the possibility of illness such as diabetes, allergies and asthma. On camping trips, especially with larger groups, food-borne illness is common. These conditions are largely treated by personal medication. Environmental conditions such as dehydration, heat illness, altitude illness, and hypothermia are treated with items other than those in the first aid kit such as space blankets, hand warmers, and hydration.



The majority of injuries that usually occur are minor cuts and scratches, splinters, blisters, sunburn, insect bites, and muscle strains. None of these require expert medical care and having the supplies to treat these can allow you to finish your activity in relative comfort with little risk of infection.

The more serious injuries such as sprains and fractures are less common, but on CMC trips they are still likely. Falls and stumbles are the biggest risks and they can require some skilled treatment with specialized medical gear. While not necessarily life-threatening, they require proper treatment in the field in order to walk out or evacuate to a higher level of care.

Feel free to customize your kit based on your training and experience. There are plenty of pre-made first aid kits on the market to choose from. Don't just buy a kit, throw it in your pack and forget it. Open it up and add or subtract items as you see fit. The following is a sample list that will allow you to deal with the most likely situations.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Personal Medications                      | 3” Conforming Gauze Roll (e.g. Kling)        |
| Face Mask                                 | 2” Cohesive Bandage Wrap (e.g. Coban)        |
| Nitrile Gloves                            | 10cc Irrigation Syringe                      |
| Antiseptic Towelettes                     | Povidone-iodine Solution Packets             |
| Trauma shears                             | Antibiotic Ointment Packets (e.g. Neosporin) |
| Tweezers                                  | Triangular Bandages (Cravats)                |
| Penlight                                  | 36” Flexible Splint (e.g. SAM Splint)        |
| Blister Prevention (e.g. Moleskin)        | 4” Elastic Wrap (e.g. Ace Bandage)           |
| Burn/Blister Dressings (e.g. 2nd Skin)    | 1” Cloth Tape                                |
| Assorted Bandages (Band-Aids)             | Pen/Pencil                                   |
| Wound Closure Strips (Butterfly Bandages) |  |
| 4”x4” Sterile Gauze Pads                  |  |
| Wilderness First Aid Pocket Guide         |  |
| Notepad                                   |  |
| Wilderness First Aid Pocket Guide         |  |

Keep your kit in a waterproof pouch or Ziplock bag to prevent contamination and deterioration. These items should be carried year-round and it makes sense to check your kit at least twice a year. Also check your kit and make adjustments if you are going on a trip with risks other than those you commonly experience. Look for expired personal medications, damaged protective wrappers and soiled items. It is also useful to take this opportunity to refresh your memory on what you are carrying. If you ever use any items from the kit, be sure to replace them immediately after getting home.

**Dave Ruscitto** is a Wilderness EMT working part-time in the Emergency Department at the Highlands Ranch Hospital and volunteers with the Douglas County Search and Rescue Team.