

Notes for Crew Leaders

Tents. You make the tent assignments. In base camp there are platform tents and it is fine for scouts to share with a parent. But on the trail, the scouts are supposed to share with scouts, and adults with adults.

Navigation. When the crew is hiking, you are always second in line, and that day's navigator is first. The adults are last. You pick each day's navigator, and by the end of the trek each scout (except you) should have had one or two turns as navigator. If the navigator is unsure about which way to go, or there is a disagreement among the scouts as to direction, you make the final call. The adults shouldn't be volunteering their opinions, but you can ask for their opinion.

Pace & Breaks. You, not the navigator, are responsible for setting the pace and making sure the crew is hiking together. So keep checking behind you, and when necessary, tell the navigator to slow down. You are also the one deciding when to take hiking breaks and for how long, and you decide when the crew should take lightning position (the adults can override you on this, for safety).

Duties. When you reach your destination each day, you immediately assign duties to the scouts. Don't make a duty chart ahead of time. Just orally tell the scouts who is to do what. The first job is to get the bear bags hung since the mini-bears are after your food. Scouts shouldn't pitch their tents until the rest of the camp is set up first.

Wake-Up. You are responsible for waking up the crew each morning, so make sure you have a reliable alarm. Breaking camp early will be the key to the crew's ability to reach each day's destination before any rain, and to have enough time to do all the activities on your itinerary. To wake people up, go to each tent and tap it until the occupants tell you they are awake. Time how long the crew takes before it starts hiking. Let the crew know how long it was, and make it a crew goal to shorten the time each day. Optional: keep a written record of each day's time.

Immediate-Need Items. For crew items that may be needed while you are hiking, have the same person carry that item every day of the trek, so you always know who has it and therefore can retrieve it quickly. That includes the first aid kit, the foot care kit, the toilet paper/trowel kit, and that day's lunch. These items shouldn't be buried in the backpack, but be in an easily accessible place.

Role of Adults. The adults aren't supposed to do any work other than carry their share of the crew equipment and food, and pitch their own tents. They don't cook or clean or hang bear bags. At each campsite, the adults just sit around and talk. The adults take an active role only when for safety.

Ask. The ranger and the lead advisor are your consultants, so don't hesitate to ask them for advice, or ask them how your tone is, or how fair you've been. Their input will help you become a better leader.

Ranger Gift. Your ranger will be with you three days, the first in base camp, the second on the trail teaching you skills, and the third on the trail watching to see if the crew has learned the skills taught. On the last evening the ranger is with you, the ranger will probably go over some final things with you after dinner. At that time, you are to get up and make a short speech thanking the ranger on behalf of the crew, and give the ranger a Troop 509 t-shirt as a token of the crew's appreciation. When the ranger leaves after the next morning's breakfast, you'll probably never see the ranger again as it is unlikely the ranger will be in base camp when you return. Before the ranger leaves you, ask for the ranger's full name and an email address, if your lead advisor hasn't already done so.