

Ride Guidelines and Responsibilities

Ride Leader

While on the trail, the Trail Leader is the boss! They will not only set the pace, navigate the trail and ensure the safety of the group but will also supervise any abnormal situations - breakdowns, recoveries or spotting over obstacles. In all cases, the Trail Leader's decision is final!

- Pre-run or know **current** condition of route beforehand.
- Have GPS track file or paper map of the ride route.
- Confirm that the trail is open and that the rating has not changed from what was advertised to the members.
- Ensure that all vehicles are capable of finishing the rated trail and are in good mechanical condition. Lockers, winch, and minimum tire sizes are required for harder trails.
- Give short instructions on how to reach trail head in case someone gets lost along the way.
- Select an air down location that does not block the trail and provides level space to allow all vehicles to park.
- Determine 1-2 potential lunch stops. Lunch spots should provide shade and off-trail parking for all vehicles.
- Make sure everyone has a radio and provide loaner if needed.
- Make sure all drivers are club members and have signed waivers.
- Send out a ride reminder a day or two before the scheduled ride.
- Take vehicle count and record driver names for club secretary.
- Do a radio check for each vehicle.
- Do a vehicle inspection for new drivers.
- Set and check pace at a comfort level for everyone. Proceed at a reasonable pace. If someone is not keeping up, talk to them in private. If multiple people are not keeping up, perhaps your pace is too fast.
- **Communicate!** Inform drivers via radio of upcoming directions and oncoming traffic. **Call out all turns at intersections.** "Keep left at the fork", "Turn right at the T intersection".
- Verify with tail gunner that group is together. Acknowledge radio messages. Expect confirmation of all your directional instructions from your Tail Gunner "Copy - Right at the Intersection". If the Tail Gunner does not respond, ask them if they heard the instructions and then tell them in private that you would like confirmation. That is your only way of knowing that your instructions were heard and understood.
- Spot anyone at any time they need it. Always spot at difficult obstacles. Err on the side of caution.
- In the event of any breakdowns or recovery tasks, take charge. Make sure safety is first and that everyone who can help is being supervised. If you don't feel comfortable with a recovery, ask for volunteers and put ONE person in charge.
- If there is a breakdown and it cannot be quickly repaired, work with the tail gunner and the driver of the broken vehicle to discuss options. If at all possible, finish the trail with the rest of the group.
- Try and stop several times in the morning and several times in the afternoon for 10-100 stops.
- Select an air up location that does not block the trail and provides level space to allow all vehicles to park.

Tail Gunner

The tail gunner has several important responsibilities to keep the Trail Leader informed of any abnormal situations, assist in breakdowns, spotting and, if necessary, taking over for the trail leader in emergencies. The Tail Gunner responsibilities include:

- Communicate! Let ride leader know when last vehicle has followed direction.
- Repeat all major instructions from the Trail Leader ("Copy - Turn Right at the intersection"). This helps ensure that all people in the pack hear the instructions and lets the trail leader know that their instructions were understood at the back of the pack. Do NOT simply say "Copy that"!
- Report to the trail leader when he/she has completed a major turn or crossed a major intersection. The trail leader should slow down after making major changes and wait for the tail gunner to confirm that the tail gunner has made the turn. "Tail has made the right turn at the intersection".
- Report to the trail leader when all vehicles are moving, following a planned stop.
- Inform ride leader if group becomes too "strung out".
- Ask another driver to relay radio messages if needed.
- Inform ride leader if a driver is having an issue.
- Report any unexpected delays to the trail leader. Unexpected delays sometimes indicate that someone is having trouble.
- Close any gates opened by the Trail Leader.
- Assist in spotting. Best practice is to relieve the Trail Leader after about half of the vehicles have been spotted up an obstacle. That way, the Leader can move on to the next obstacle.
- Report to the trail leader if the group is being overtaken by faster-moving traffic. The trail leader will then have everyone pull over and let the faster-moving traffic pass.
- Report to the leader when oncoming traffic has cleared the group.
- Let the driver of oncoming traffic know you are the last one in your group.

Drivers

As a driver you have several responsibilities to make sure you and your passengers have a safe and enjoyable trail ride. Remember, the **ride leader is in charge, but is NOT a tour guide!** It is up to you to have a capable and properly equipped off-road vehicle, have competent off-road driving skills, and to assess the trails and obstacles before you attempt them.

- Give your vehicle a safety and mechanical check before leaving home.
- Make sure you know how to operate your vehicle's off-road features.
- Fuel up and be ready to go before the ride start time.
- Be aware of and comfortable with the difficulty level of the ride. Ask leader if unsure.
- Have a GMRS capable radio or borrow one. Must work on GMRS-16 (462.575 MHz).
- Keep an eye on the Jeep behind you. Wait at each intersection to be sure the driver behind you goes the right way.
- Communicate! Use your radio if you need help, a spot, or you are unsure of the direction to go, or if you see someone else needs help or is having trouble keeping up. Pass along messages about oncoming traffic, especially if passing is an issue.
- Keep radio messages clear and brief. It's fine to point things out or talk with other drivers, but don't "step on" directional messages from the leader and tail gunner.
- Keep up with the group. Let the leader know if you feel the pace is too fast for safety.

- Situational Awareness. Stay aware of what is going on around you and your vehicle. Watch for other off-road traffic, wildlife, and any other situation that can cause a problem for you and your fellow off-roaders.
- Give the vehicles around you plenty of room to maneuver on the trail. Do not tailgate. If the vehicle in front of you is going up/down a steep hill climb wait until they are at the top/bottom before you start your turn.
- Vehicles on our rides range from highly modified with experienced drivers to completely stock with brand new drivers. The amount of time and help different vehicles will need getting over some of the obstacles will vary greatly. Always be helpful and patient.
- Do not litter. If you pack it in, pack it out. This includes cigarette butts.
- If someone in our group breaks down the trail ride will stop until we get them repaired. We will never leave someone behind. When you attend a ride be aware that it is always possible that someone may have bad luck and break their Jeep and stop the ride. Please be patient, it could be you next time!
- Be aware that a trail ride may take longer than planned due to breakage or unforeseen problems. Bring more food and water than you think you will need and be prepared to get home late. Safety always comes first. Please know your vehicle limitations and think of your safety and the safety of others before attempting that insane obstacle. We are on the trails to have a fun time, not to get hurt or total our Jeeps.