



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)

HIKING

NOTE: This SOP is applicable to all hikes (various locations)

Equipment needed:	Hiking shoes, Backpack, Water, Snacks, Sunscreen
Facilitator equipment:	Own hiking gear, Water, Snacks, First aid kit, Cellphone with emergency contact details, Spade, Toilet paper
Facilitator qualification:	N/A (a hiking guide / field guide qualification will be a bonus)
First aid requirements:	At least one person with a level 1 first aid qualification
Staffing:	Minimum 3
Ratio:	1:5

SUMMARIZED SOP

Check

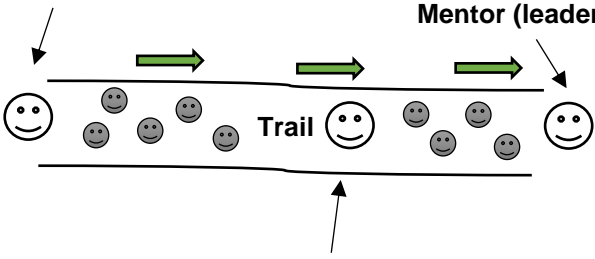

BEFORE - At the campsite / start	√
Step 1 – Assess conditions	
Step 2 – Gather the group (mentors and boys)	
Step 3 – Pre activity line-up	
Step 4 – Check everyone’s personal gear	
Step 5 – Introduce and discuss the activity	
Step 6 – Buddy system	
DURING – On the trail	√
Step 7 – Mentor positioning	
Step 8 – Hiking activity	
AFTER – At the campsite / end	√
Step 9 – Post activity line-up	
Step 10 – Debrief	

DETAILED SOP



BEFORE - At the campsite / start		
Step 1 – Assess conditions	Activity leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the weather. • If it seems like there is heavy rain and/or lightning on the way, rather postpone or cancel the hiking activity.
Step 2 – Gather	Activity leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather the group (boys and mentors).
Step 3 – Line-up	Activity leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do a line-up to make sure everyone is present before you start the activity briefing.
Step 4 – Check personal equipment	Activity leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check to make sure the boys (and mentors) have everything they need for the activity.
Step 5 – Introduce and discuss	Activity leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the activity by telling the boys where we are going, and how long the hike will be. • Discuss the rules and expectations; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mentors and boys to keep their eyes open for any hazards. Examples include - overhead branches or rocks that might fall, dangerous animals like snakes, etc. ➤ Follow the 7 LNT principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Plan ahead and prepare ○ Travel on durable surfaces (stay on the trail) ○ Dispose of waste properly (don't litter) ○ Leave what you find ○ Minimize campfire impacts ○ Respect wildlife ○ Be considerate of other visitors ➤ Stay behind the first mentor, and in front of the last mentor. ➤ Don't run off or climb onto anything unless a mentor has confirmed that it is safe to do so. ➤ Don't throw stones. ➤ Report bad behaviour and injuries to a mentor. ➤ Have a positive attitude. ➤ Always keep an eye on your friends. ➤ Encourage and help each other. ➤ Stay together. ➤ Always listen to the instructions of the hiking leader. ➤ When the call is made to turn back, everyone needs to do so immediately.

- Good questions to ask before the hike:
 - Why do we hike? What are the benefits?
 - It keeps us physically active
 - It builds strength
 - We get to observe and appreciate nature
 - Outside we get to breath fresh / clean air
 - It can reduce stress and anxiety
 - It teaches us a few life lessons
- **Good hiking techniques to share before the hike:**
 - Consistency. Aim to finish the day walking the same speed at which you started. Rhythm and flow is important.
 - Shorter strides, longer strides, up on your toes, back on your heels. Do whatever it takes to minimize muscle tension in particular areas.
 - Help keep your muscles supple by doing some light stretching during breaks.
 - Pay extra attention to foot placement.
 - When the gradient is steep, taking smaller steps will help to keep your centre of gravity over your legs, thus promoting greater balance and control.
 - When going downhill, don't lean forward and don't lean back. Your centre of gravity should be low and over your legs.
 - Keep your downhill leg slightly bent on impact. This will help minimize stress on the knees, as the muscles rather than the joints take most of the strain.
 - When you are feeling tired, focus on one step at a time and take deep breaths.
 - Focus on positive thoughts, rather than how exhausted you feel.

Step 6 – Buddy system	Activity leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a buddy system. Each boy should be paired up with another boy and should stay with that “buddy” for the rest of the activity.
DURING – On the trail		
Step 7 – Mentor positioning	Activity leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need mentors in the front, middle and at the back. <p style="text-align: center;">Mentor in the back</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Mentor (leader) in the front</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mentor in the middle</p>
Step 8 – Hiking activity	<div style="text-align: center;"></div> MENtors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The safety of the venue and hiking area should have been previously ascertained, and all reasonable precautions taken to ensure the safety of the boys. From early on, evaluate your hikers’ abilities and adjust the pace accordingly. Make sure the group stays together. Never leave someone behind. Manage the time, and make sure you stop to look at and appreciate certain things in nature. If you have a field guide present that can teach the group something, even better. Constantly encourage the boys to do their best and help each other. Remind the boys of the hiking techniques. Make sure the boys are drinking enough water. If they drink from the river, make sure they do so where the water is flowing. Check for hazards on a regular basis. Have each boy find his buddy every 15-20 minutes. Boys who cannot find their buddy should notify a mentor immediately. Mentors should do a head count on a regular basis. Manage the behaviour of the group.
AFTER – At the campsite / end		
Step 9 – Line-up	Activity leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do a line-up to make sure everyone is safely back at the campsite.
Step 10 – Debrief	Activity leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The debrief is very important because it will help the boys to think back and talk about their experiences, develop insights, reduce negative feelings regarding

the activity and connect the activity to real-life situations.

- A few lessons that relates to life:

1. Being prepared is essential for both hiking, and life in general.

2. As we go through life, we often easily give up on our hopes and dreams, overcome by challenges, disappointment or rejection. Hiking teaches us that as long as you're putting one foot in front of the other, you are getting somewhere.

3. Hiking, as with life, is not always a walk in the park. From blisters and bruises to a shortage of water supply, there will always be challenges and setbacks along the way. But guess what? These things not only make you stronger, but they also help build character. They teach us perseverance.

4. Hiking (and life) can be quite a frustrating and exhausting struggle at times. But when everyone is just as stressed, frustrated, tired and nervous, try to make things a little better with your enthusiasm and optimism.

5. Hiking teaches us to slow down, soak in the scenery, and to appreciate nature. Like life, it's a wonderful journey that should be enjoyed. We often find ourselves unable to see and appreciate nature. We become so preoccupied with ourselves, gadgets and work that we forget to notice the beauty right in front of our eyes.

6. You won't get to enjoy the breathtaking view from the summit if you don't hike the numerous difficult kilometers to get there. In the same way, you won't get to enjoy well deserved success in life if you are not willing to put in the hard work.

7. Hiking teaches us the value of teamwork. Encouraging and supporting one another throughout the hike (and life) makes it so much better.

Know the risks:

DEHYDRATION



Dehydration occurs when you use or lose more fluid than you take in, and your body doesn't have enough water and other fluids to carry out its normal functions.

OVERHYDRATION



Overhydration happens when your body takes in or holds onto more fluid than your kidneys can remove. Drinking too much water or not having a way to remove it can cause water levels to build up. This dilutes important substances in your blood.

INJURY



Injuries can result from being reckless, the misuse of equipment, disregard of safety practices and other inadvisable activities.

DANGEROUS ANIMALS



It is wise to be aware of the potential dangers of the environments you hike in. By being conscious of what threats certain wild animals can pose, and by knowing how to properly react to those threats, you will greatly improve your chances to successfully survive an animal encounter.

WEATHER CONDITIONS



Threatening weather, like a thunderstorm, can become dangerous if you don't get yourself to safety.

Dangerous snakes that you might encounter:



The Night Adder is generally a docile snake but will hiss aggressively and strike when provoked. The Night Adder has moderate cytotoxic venom which is not known to have caused any human fatalities. Victims usually experience severe pain and swelling and sometimes need hospitalization for a few days; however antivenom is not required nor is it effective.



The Mozambique Spitting Cobra is considered one of the most dangerous snakes in Africa. The snake can quite accurately spit its venom up to three meters. Its venom is potently cytotoxic causing pain, swelling, blisters and in many cases severe tissue damage (similar to that of the puff adder). Venom to the eyes can also cause impaired vision and if left untreated could cause blindness.

What to do in a hiking emergency

Common sense and good decision making go a long way in keeping you safe. However, accidents can and do happen so it's good to be prepared and know what to do in an emergency.

Assess

- 👉 The main thing is to establish the extent of the injury to the injured party.
- 👉 Determine whether the injured party is in a fit enough condition to get off the hiking trail on their own or with help from the rest of the hiking party.

Treat

- 👉 If the injury is minor and some basic first aid will treat it, then you know what to do.
- 👉 If the injury is more severe, but you are able and qualified to treat it, you can go ahead and do so.
- 👉 Assist the injured party to get off the hiking trail.
- 👉 Administer CPR and treat for shock if necessary (refer to first aid SOP).

Call for help

- 👉 If you are unsure how to assess the situation or unsure what the best course of action would be, you need to contact Mountain Rescue or the Emergency Services.
- 👉 As a broad guide, the rescue service will likely start by asking you specific questions about the incident. Be ready to provide:
 - Location
 - Number of people in your hiking party and names
 - Detail on injuries / casualties
 - Your phone number as well as others in the group
 - Incident detail – time it happened, what happened, etc.
 - Equipment available at your location
 - Landmarks or features at your location
 - Location coordinates if you have them
- 👉 The rescue service will use this information to help them make their own assessment of the situation. Based on that they will then give you advice on what you should do.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

GAUTENG

MCSA Search & Rescue

074 125 1385 OR 074 163 3952

QRS (TCC Partner)

081 277 7777

HEMS (Hartbeespoort)

082 695 1240

WESTERN CAPE

MCSA Search & Rescue

021 937 0300

EASTERN CAPE

East London –

fire / rescue / emergency

043 705 9000