

## **Mountain Club of Maryland**

### **EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN FOR APPALACHIAN TRAIL VOLUNTEER WORK**

*November 2020*

#### **PART I: BACKGROUND**

##### INTRODUCTION

This document has been developed to comply with National Park Service (NPS) requirements included in its Volunteer Services Agreement with the Mountain Club of Maryland (MCM). It reflects policies and guidance promulgated by NPS and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) regarding work planning, safety, and injury response and reporting.

##### TRAIL LOCATIONS

MCM maintains three trail sections of the Appalachian Trail (A.T.):

- In Pennsylvania (PA), from PA-233 at Pine Grove Furnace State Park to Center Point Knob, including the Pole Steeple Trail and the White Rocks Trail. The James Fry Shelter and the Alec Kennedy Shelter are situated on this section, which is located in Cumberland County. This section includes two notable side trails maintained by MCM: the Pole Steeple Trail and the White Rocks Trail.
- In PA, from the Tuscarora Trail intersection (top of Blue Mountain) to the Juniata River in Duncannon. This section, which is in Perry County, includes the Bishop Darlington Shelter and the Cove Mountain Shelter.
- In Maryland, on behalf of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC), MCM maintains a 10-mile section of the Trail from Wolfsville Road to the Pennsylvania (PA) border at PenMar. PATC, not MCM, maintains the hiking shelters along this Trail section, which is located in Washington County, Maryland.

##### TYPES OF MCM VOLUNTEER WORK ACTIVITIES

The types of work generally performed by MCM volunteers, which are eligible for NPS' Volunteer in Parks (VIP) protection, can be summarized as follows:

- MCM organizes work trips (typically consisting of work crews of 4-12 volunteers) each year to make improvements to MCM's assigned A.T. sections in PA and Maryland.
- We also organize a smaller number of work trips (typically about once or twice a year) to one of our four A.T. shelters (or to other facilities such as parking areas) for small construction or repair jobs, painting / staining, etc.
- Our club volunteers perform regular maintenance visits to their assigned Trail sections or to the shelters, usually alone or with a companion.
- Similarly, MCM trail maintainers perform Trail visits to clear downed trees or large branches, remove hazard trees, etc. This work is most often carried out by a few

volunteers rather than larger work groups, but is categorized separately from other Trail maintenance because the chain saw work is carried out by approved sawyers, working within their certification level, who hold ATC Saw Program certifications.

- Our volunteer boundary monitors may go out (alone or with one or two companions) to carry out boundary monitoring duties.
- Finally, MCM hike leaders typically lead approximately 20-25 hikes annually on portions of the A.T. as part of the club's ongoing hiking activities.

(We note that MCM offers periodic first training classes and/or reimburses trip leaders, sawyers, and section maintainers for First Aid certifications.)

MCM's emergency response guidelines for these three work categories are described in Part II below. Volunteers are encouraged to carry the Part II guidelines with them as a reference tool when performing their volunteer work.

## **PART II: EMERGENCY RESPONSE GUIDELINES**

For any activity, trip leaders follow tailgate safety session protocols that include reviewing medical/first aid training and kits among participants, assigning an alternate crew leader in the event leader has emergency, review closest exits to vehicles and locations of keys, offer options for participants to disclose existing medical health conditions, and where to find the emergency response and communications plan below. Individual volunteers should carry their first aid kit, a communication device (cell phone), and have the emergency response and communication plan below. All volunteers should be aware of their location of work, generally, and be able to offer context to someone called to help.

### **INJURY RESPONSE ACTIONS**

1. For minor injuries, if hiking, the group will stop long enough for the person to treat the problem.
2. For more serious incidents, the person with highest current medical certifications is asked to aid the injured party. If the trip leader is the aid person, a temporary trip leader is appointed to manage the group. In either case, the role of the trip leader is to keep the group safe and facilitate medical treatment or evacuation as needed. The group will be removed from the immediate scene to provide patient privacy.
3. For events where professional medical treatment is warranted and the person can self-evacuate, destination decision will be made by the injured party in consult with medical advice. Hospital emergency room, free-standing clinic or return home for personal physician is acceptable. Cell phone coverage is near universal in our area and treatment centers can be easily searched. Clinic locations change with business decisions so it is not possible to keep valid permanent list.
4. For medical problems beyond the scope of the available medical support, 911 will be called to initiate rescue. The responding emergency medical services crew will make medical decisions, evacuation plans and where to send the patient for treatment.

### **MEDICAL FACILITY LOCATIONS**

Medical facility locations change with business decisions so it is not possible to keep a valid permanent list. Generally speaking, in the event of an emergency which requires transport of an injured volunteer to a medical facility, the nearest hospitals are:

- For our northernmost Trail section in PA (from Blue Mountain to Duncannon), the nearest emergency hospital is Holy Spirit Hospital, 503 North 21st Street, Camp Hill, PA 17011.
- For our southern Trail section in PA (from PA-233 to Center Point Knob), the nearest emergency hospital is Carlisle Regional Medical Center, 361 Alexander Spring Road, Carlisle, PA 17015.
- For our section of the A.T. in Maryland, the nearest hospital is Meritus Medical Center, 11116 Medical Campus Road, Hagerstown, MD, 21742.

However, if a volunteer sustains injuries that require transport to a hospital, MCM expects that emergency response personnel, not MCM, will choose the facility to which the volunteer is transported.

## REPORTING

MCM will report injuries promptly to ATC and NPS in accordance with the instructions in its VIP packet. These instructions state that trail clubs should:

1. Call the Chief Ranger for the Appalachian Trail to report the injury.
  - During Business Hours: Work: 304-535-6170, Cell: 304-650-2677.]
  - After Hours: NCRCC/APPA Dispatch Line: 1-866-677-6677. (Request that the message be delivered to the A.T. Chief Ranger).
2. Complete form CA-1 (Report of Injury), *including the witness statement on the form*, and mail to Chief Ranger at the address below. The Chief Ranger will contact the volunteer and the crew leader.
3. If the injured volunteer is seeking formal medical treatment, he/she will ask the attending physician to complete and return form CA-16 (Authorization for Examination and/or Treatment) to: Chief Ranger, NPS-Appalachian National Scenic Trail, P.O. Box 50 (252 McDowell Street, Cook Hall) Harpers Ferry, WV 25425
4. Report the injury to the ATC Mid-Atlantic Regional Office at 717-258-5771.