



5th DIMENSION OUTDOOR CLUB HANDBOOK AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

REVISED APRIL 2026

The 5th Dimension Outdoor Club (The Club) was established as an organization for the purpose of providing active seniors, 55 years of age and older, with the opportunity to participate in outdoor activities as a group. It is the fifth such group in the City of Calgary, hence its name. The Club acknowledges its debt to the City of Calgary Parks and Recreation Department for their invaluable assistance in the formation of The Club in the spring of 1991.

Table of Contents

1.0 THE CLUB..... 3

 1.1 Meetings 3

 1.2 Liability 3

2.0 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE..... 3

3.0 CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP 4

 3.1 Regular Members 5

 3.2 Associate Members 5

 3.3 Life Members 5

 3.4 Guests 5

 3.5 ADDING GUESTS TO AN OUTING 6

4.0 SAFETY RULES AND GUIDELINES 6

5.0 TRANSPORTATION 8

6.0 SAFETY PROTOCOL 8

7.0 NOT FOLLOWING THE BYLAWS, RULES, OR GUIDELINES 9

 7.1 Phone Call 10

 7.2 Evaluation 10

 7.2.1 Verbal Warning 10

 7.2.2 Suspension 11

 7.2.3 Removal for Cause 11

 7.3 Appeal..... 11

8.0 INABILITY TO MEET THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS..... 12

 8.1 Phone Call 12

 8.3 Formal Letter 14

 8.4 Appeal..... 15

9.0 INCIDENT / EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN (IERP)¹ 16

1.0 THE CLUB

The Club runs solely on Volunteer support from its members.

The Club goes on weekly outings every Thursday, weather permitting. Exceptions include the Club Picnic, Annual General Meeting, Christmas Party and Spring Meeting.

1.1 Meetings

The Spring General Meeting is held on the second (2nd) Thursday in April or alternate if required.

The Annual General Meeting is held on the last Thursday in October or alternate if required.

Meetings of the Executive Committee will be held at the discretion of the President but shall be held at least six (6) times per year.

1.2 Liability

The Club carries Public Liability Insurance for two million (\$2,000,000) dollars. The policy provides joint coverage with other senior outdoor clubs in Calgary.

2.0 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

All members of the Executive Committee serve for two (2) years except for the Vice-President, President, and Past President, each of whom shall hold office until the next AGM.

The Executive consists of:

- 1. Past President 3rd Year of 3 Year Term**
- 2. President 2nd Year of 3 Year Term**
- 3. Vice-President 1st Year of 3 Year Term**
- 4. Treasurer**
- 5. Club Secretary**
- 6. Membership Coordinator**
- 7. Bus Coordinator**
- 8. Summer Hiking Coordinator**
- 9. Winter Hiking Coordinator**
- 10. Communication Coordinator**

3.0 CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

1. Open to those who are fifty-five (55) years of age or older. To be eligible for membership and to maintain membership in the Club, a person must: have a general level of physical fitness and mental competence which permits them to hike, snowshoe, cross-country ski, or pursue other active outdoor group activities while ensuring their own safety. Decisions on this requirement are at the sole discretion of the Executive Committee.
2. The membership year runs from October 1st to September 30th of the following year. The yearly membership fee is set at the AGM.
3. Membership is limited to 150. The Executive Committee shall have the discretion to admit new members during the membership year providing this does not exceed the limit stated.
4. Members must comply with Club by-laws, policies, rules and safety guidelines.

3.1 Regular Members

Members are eligible to renew their membership provided they have participated in a minimum of **thirteen (13)**, bus outings during the current hiking season from October 1st to September 30th. Members must sign the annual Application, Waiver and Indemnification form. The Executive Committee will review mitigating circumstances.

3.2 Associate Members

Associate Members have no MINIMUM HIKE REQUIREMENTS; however, if the bus is filled, they will be asked to step down so a Regular Member may go on the outing. Associate Members have priority over guests if space becomes available on the bus. Associate Members must sign the annual Application, Waiver and Indemnification form and pay the annual fee. The Executive Committee will review mitigating circumstances. Associate members must have a **minimum of 10 years** with the club.

3.3 Life Members

Life Members do not need to meet the Club's requirements for physical ability or mental competence to attend social events held by The Club. Life Members will not be invited to The Club's weekly outings. Life Members must have a **minimum of 15 years** with the club. Life Members pay no annual fee.

3.4 Guests

1. Guests (18 years of age or older) are welcome if there is room on the bus. Guests will be subject to all general rules and guidelines, including bus fare and signing/initialing a waiver for each outing they attend.
2. When on the trails, guests must stay in groups of four **(4)** or more with at least one club member within that group.

3.5 ADDING GUESTS TO AN OUTING

To help us manage seating and communication effectively, please follow this process when inviting a guest:-

- DO NOT use the Evite comment section
- Instead, please contact the Membership Coordinator directly with your guest's **email address and phone number**.
- The Membership Coordinator will forward a waiver and a medical form to the guest who will complete them and bring them on their first hike.
- The guest will be added to the Evite address book by the Communications Coordinator.
- Invitations will be sent out to guests after noon on Sunday, provided there is space available on the bus. This approach ensures fair and equal access for all guests to any open seats.
- If your guest is a one-time visitor (such as a friend or relative visiting from out of town), we're happy to try and accommodate them. Just be sure to provide their contact info to the Membership Coordinator so we can include them in the process.
- Once the Evite is closed, any further requests will be added to a wait list managed by the Bus Coordinator on a first-come, first-served basis.

4.0 SAFETY RULES AND GUIDELINES

1. Please remember that this is a GROUP EXPERIENCE designed to provide a safe and pleasurable activity for all participants. Continued failure to observe the rules and guidelines will result in the Executive Committee review of membership eligibility.
2. When on the trails, hiking groups must consist of four (4) or more persons.

3. Members are to choose a group suitable to their physical capabilities. Members are to use the following grid as a **minimum distance** in selecting said group:

Level	Distance	Elevation Gain
A/A2	12-16 kms	500 meters plus
B1	13 kms	400 meters
B2	10 kms	300 meters
C	4 kms	100 meters

Groups should be able to accomplish these distances in the allotted time for a normal Club outing. The Day Coordinator will provide assistance if more information is required.

4. If a member or guest is having trouble keeping up with the group, the Group Lead or Sweep is to be notified immediately, and a safe alternative will be arranged.
5. Members and guests are asked to stay on the chosen trail between the Group Lead and Sweep.
6. Adequate clothing and sturdy footwear are the responsibility of the member. Members should be prepared for sudden weather changes.
7. A well-stocked backpack, including food, beverage, basic first aid kit, extra socks, gloves, head covering, and icers in winter and shoulder seasons are the responsibility of the individual member.
8. A card (issued yearly with renewal information), specifying current medications and/or medical conditions along with their Alberta Health Care Number, must be carried on the outside of the member's backpack in a way that is clearly visible. If you need a new pouch or form, contact the Membership Coordinator.

9. Seating on the bus is on a first come basis both going and returning. If a member brings extra bags that will not be carried on the hike, it is asked that the bag(s) be placed in the overhead bin of the bus, not left on the seat.

5.0 TRANSPORTATION

1. The Executive Committee will approve bus Contracts/Agreements.
2. The bus fare shall be set at the discretion of the Executive Committee.
3. The bus may be cancelled due to safety and/or weather conditions and/or lack of participation.
4. The normal transportation method will be by bus. Car-pooling **IS NOT** endorsed by the Club.
5. Members will be notified of bus departure locations and times. All hike details including transportation information are provided in the Evite invitation.
6. All Registrants (members and guests) cancelling after 1800 (6 pm) on Sunday **MUST** contact the BUS COORDINATOR. This is to ensure members and guests on the waitlist can be accommodated. Those who cancel after 1800 (6 pm) are responsible for payment of all fees.

6.0 SAFETY PROTOCOL

A protocol to ensure all members of The Club enjoy club activities in the safest possible environment, meeting the minimum physical or mental competence requirements while following The Club rules and/or guidelines.

This document outlines the guidelines and procedures for those who fall short and provides a respectful process to resolve deficiencies.

As is clearly stated in our handbook, The Club is an organization established for the purpose of providing active seniors with the opportunity to participate in outdoor activities as a group. The Club also emphasizes our outings are designed to provide a safe and pleasurable activity for all participants. Key to achieving that purpose is members are both active and safe while on club outings.

The handbook section titled “Safety Rules and Guidelines” has information to help each member and guest be safe while participating in active outdoor activities. Included in the section are rules/guidelines on individual behaviour while on the trail, as well as rules on minimum capabilities that must be met to remain a member of The Club.

7.0 NOT FOLLOWING THE BYLAWS, RULES, OR GUIDELINES

The rules and guidelines of The Club have been put in place to ensure members and guests have the opportunity to enjoy an active and safe outing when participating in club activities.

If a member fails to follow the rules and/or guidelines, it jeopardizes not only the safety of that individual, but also the safety and enjoyment of all the others involved in the activity. The following provides the steps that will be followed in the situation where a member has disregarded the rules and/or guidelines of The Club.

When it is brought to the attention of the Executive Committee – either by direct observation or through a notification from another member – that a member has violated a rule and/or guideline of the Club, the Executive Committee shall follow the process outlined below.

7.1 Phone Call

A phone call to the member by a person from the Executive Committee is made discussing the circumstances around the event. This call is intended as a fact-finding call, the purpose of which is solely to obtain the member's perspective on the situation.

7.2 Evaluation

After obtaining as much information as practical on the event, the Executive Committee will review the circumstances of the event and will then determine an appropriate course of action. In making this determination, the Executive Committee will consider;

The seriousness of the event – minor, moderate, or major

Whether there have been similar and/or related situations involving disregard for the rules or guidelines of the Club by this member in the past.

If the Executive Committee determines the situation merits corrective follow up with the member, the Committee will determine the appropriate level of action to be taken. In increasing order of seriousness, the possible corrective actions are:

7.2.1 Verbal Warning

A person from the Executive Committee will contact the member and indicate a warning for violation of a club rule or guideline is being issued. The Executive Committee person will tell the member that further disregard for The Club's rules will lead to more severe consequences; potentially leading to removal for cause. The fact a warning has been issued shall be documented in the Executive Committee Minutes.

7.2.2 Suspension

The second level of corrective follow-up is a suspension. A person from the Executive Committee will contact the member notifying the member of the suspension. A written letter will also be sent to the Member documenting the violation(s) of The Club's rules and guidelines. The letter will state the Executive Committee is suspending the member's club privileges for a specified period of 1 - 3 months and further disregard for The Club's rules will lead to removal for cause.

7.2.3 Removal for Cause

The ultimate level of corrective action is removal for cause. A formal letter will be sent to the member documenting the violations of rules and guidelines that have occurred and stating the member is being removed for cause. The letter will explain an appeal mechanism is available to the member.

7.3 Appeal

The bylaws provide for an appeal:

"2.5 Any Member of The Club may be expelled from Membership for cause (including but not limited to: rules violations, safety violations, non-payment of levies) upon a unanimous decision of the Executive Committee providing that the Executive Committee has given the Member written notice and the opportunity to appear before the Executive Committee to be heard with respect to all matters offered or tendered in justification for such a decision.

Any person expelled from The Club may appeal that decision to the full membership. Said appeal will be heard at the next General Meeting or, if so requested, at a Special General Meeting called for the Purpose."

8.0 INABILITY TO MEET THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Item #2 in the “Safety Rules and Guidelines” section of the handbook specifically addresses the active part of our charter. The requirements of this item are very important because a member or guest trying to stay with a group where they do not have the physical and/or mental capabilities to do so poses a safety risk both to the individual and other members of the group. All members should realize **if a person cannot meet the requirements of the lowest level, they should not be coming on the outings at all.**

To be clear, The Club’s policy is if an individual is not physically and/or mentally capable of completing at least the C level requirement of item #2, that person is not to come on outings. This is the case whether the situation is permanent or temporary.

When the situation is temporary and the member expects to regain their capabilities, The Club policy allows the Executive Committee to waive the minimum hike requirements for a year. If the situation is permanent, The Club has the Lifetime Member category which allows the individual to maintain a social involvement with The Club.

The following provides the steps to be followed in the situation where a member who is no longer physically and/or mentally capable of meeting at least the C level criteria continues to sign-up and come on outings.

When it is brought to the attention of the Executive Committee – either by direct observation or through a notification from another member – a member may not be meeting the minimum physical and/or mental competence requirements of The Club the following steps will be taken.

8.1 Phone Call

A phone call to the member by a person from the Executive Committee is made, discussing whether (i) there is an inability to meet the minimum physical and/or mental competence requirements; and/or (ii) whether the

inability to meet the minimum physical and/or mental competence requirements is temporary.

If **(i)** there is an inability to meet the minimum physical and/or mental competence requirements and that inability is expected to be permanent, then the person from the Executive Committee would advise the Member they can no longer attend the club outings but can become a Lifetime Member and still enjoy the social aspects of The Club; and advise them The Club will reimburse their Membership Fee. **The Member would be asked to provide a written or electronic notice of resignation from the Club, as per By-Law 2.6.**

If **(ii)** there is a temporary inability to meet the minimum physical and/or mental competence requirements, then the person from the Executive Committee would advise the Member they can no longer attend club outings but may remain a Current Member on a one (1) year medical exemption. The member must meet The Club requirements to maintain membership after the 1-year medical exemption.

If **(iii)** the Member believes that they **can** meet the minimum physical and/or mental competence requirements, the Executive Committee person would advise the member that at least 2 members from the Executive Committee (including one of their choosing, if so desired) will join them on their next outing to assess their ability to meet the minimum physical and/or mental competence requirements. This will be done on the next outing the Member signs up for. The Executive Committee persons would bring their findings to the next Executive Meeting.

If the Executive Committee determines the member does not meet The Club's minimum requirements, the next step is to remove the member from The Club.

8.3 Formal Letter

According to the By-Laws:

“2.2 To be eligible for membership and to maintain membership in The Club, a person must: have a general level of physical fitness and mental competence which permits them to hike, snowshoe, cross-country ski, or pursue other active outdoor group activities while ensuring their own safety. Decisions on this requirement are at the sole discretion of the Executive Committee.” As such if after investigation:

- The Executive Committee believes the Member is unable to meet the minimum physical and/or mental competence requirements of The Club, and that this is not a temporary situation, and the Member does not choose to resign from The Club or to change to the Lifetime Member category, then the Executive Committee shall vote on whether to expel that Member. If the Executive Committee votes unanimously to expel the Member, a formal letter is written and sent to the Member, advising them that the Executive Committee believes that they are no longer able to meet the minimum physical and/or mental competence requirements of The Club.
- According to By-Law(s) 2.2 and 2.5, and, if appropriate, citing the Handbook guideline (the minimum physical and/or mental competence requirement; currently 4 km and 100 m elevation gain over 5 hours), the Member is therefore being expelled from membership for cause.
- The letter would also mention the Member can become a Lifetime Member and still enjoy the social aspects of The Club. The letter would advise the Member. The Club would reimburse their Membership Fee.
- The letter would advise the Member of their ability to appeal the decision as permitted by By-Law 2.5.

ii) The Executive Committee believes a Member is unable to meet the minimum physical and/or mental competence requirements of The Club and this is a temporary situation.

- The Member does not refrain from signing up for outings until their capabilities have returned, then the Executive Committee shall vote on whether to expel that Member. If the Executive Committee votes unanimously to expel the Member, a second formal letter is written and sent to the Member.
- According to By-Law(s) 2.2 and 2.5, and, if appropriate, citing the Handbook guideline (currently a minimum physical requirement of 4 km and 100 m elevation gain over 5 hours), the Member is therefore being expelled from membership for cause, until such time as they can again meet the minimum physical and/or mental competence requirements.
- The letter would advise them The Club will reimburse their Membership Fee.
- The letter would also mention that the Member either can become a Lifetime Member or can reapply to become a Current Member when they are able to meet the minimum physical and/or mental competence requirements, without having to go through the Guest process.
- Further, the letter would advise the Member of their ability to appeal the decision as permitted by the By-Law 2.5.

8.4 Appeal

The bylaws provide for an appeal:

“2.5 Any Member of the Club may be expelled from Membership for cause (including but not limited to: rules violations, safety violations, non-payment of levies) upon a unanimous decision of the Executive Committee providing that the Executive Committee has given the Member written notice and the opportunity to appear before the Executive Committee to be heard with respect to all matters offered or tendered in justification for such a decision. Any person expelled from the Club may appeal that decision to the full membership. Said appeal will be heard at the next General Meeting or if so requested at a special general Meeting called for the Purpose.”

9.0 INCIDENT / EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN (IERP)¹

- Types of situations:

An **incident** is a situation that can be managed within the immediate group; an **emergency** is declared when outside help is required. Broadly categorized, situations can involve medical conditions, missing or lost hikers, severe weather, natural hazards, wildlife encounters and/or vehicle mishaps.

- Authority:

The hiking group lead (or sweep if the lead is incapacitated) is the default **incident leader** and is responsible for assessing the situation and deciding how to proceed. In the event of a medical situation, s/he may assign a trained medical individual as the incident lead. An **emergency manager** will be identified before hikers leave the bus. The emergency manager is the primary contact in the event of an emergency (i.e., when outside help is required) and is responsible for coordinating with all other hikers not in the affected hiking group.

- In the event of an unforeseen incident / or emergency, you can expect the following:
 - The hiking lead (and/or designate) will take charge. Suggestions may be welcome, but it is the lead's responsibility to manage the situation. Please be considerate of that responsibility.
 - Depending on the nature of the situation, the group may be asked to return to the bus early. This means that the hiking day may not turn out as planned.

- All communication devices (i.e., cell phones, walkie-talkies and Garmin Minis) will be deployed by the incident lead and/or emergency manager. You can expect regular and comprehensive updates.
- Given the nature of emergencies, you are encouraged to plan accordingly (e.g., carry extra water, food, distractions, etc.)

❖ ¹This document is based on the more extensive policy and procedures developed for the Club and is intended to inform Club members of what to expect in an unexpected situation.

INCORPORATION of BYLAWS

The 5th Dimension Outdoor Club Bylaws were
incorporated under
The Societies Act of Alberta on
July 15th, 1996.

The BYLAWS were updated in March 2014 and
filed with the Corporate Registry on
June 20th, 2014.