

# WILDERNESS EXPEDITIONS, INC.

## SAFETY POLICY

Wilderness Expeditions, Inc. (herein referred to as WE) considers safety to be a top priority. By setting and maintaining strict protocols, Wilderness Expeditions has an excellent safety record. We trust the credentials, standards, and protocols listed below will answer most of your questions concerning our commitment to the highest standards of safety. For questions, please contact WE at 719-539-4888 or email [info@wildernessexpeditions.net](mailto:info@wildernessexpeditions.net)

### ***Licenses and Permits***

Wilderness Expeditions, Inc. operates in the State of Colorado with a commercial outfitting permit. WE has been licensed to operate in the national forests since 1989 by the USDA Forest Service. The operating season for Wilderness Expeditions, Inc. lasts from May to August each year.

### ***Insurance***

Wilderness Expeditions, Inc., as required by state law, carries liability insurance. WE does not provide individual or group medical coverage for participants or employees. Individual participants and employees are responsible for providing their own insurance.

### ***General Safety Procedures***

WE base camp location is 7870 W. HWY 50 Salida, Colorado. While in operation, a staff member is always available at base camp in the event of an emergency. At least one Field Guide and one Field Staff are with each group of 20 participants on backcountry trips. Groups do not exceed 20 participants unless otherwise specified. Each staff carries a radio and/or mobile phone and is in regular contact with base camp. All staff are familiar with the location of the nearest medical facility. Ambulance, Search and Rescue, and Life Flight services are available in the event of life and death emergencies. Heart-of-the-Rockies Medical Center is only ten minutes from WE base camp. All sites and activities have been researched and chosen to balance adventure with the well being of the participants.

### ***Personnel***

Field Guides for Wilderness Expeditions, Inc. meet or exceed the following qualifications:

- 21 years of age\* or older
- Hold current First Aid and CPR certification
- Have technical experience consistent with their specialized role on the staff
- Have participated in at least five (5) group backpacking trips as Field Staff
- Have completed Wilderness Expeditions, Inc. guide training program
- Have exhibited the maturity to be an effective leader of participants and other staff

Field Staff for Wilderness Expeditions, Inc. meet or exceed the following qualifications:

- 18 years of age\* or older
- Hold current First Aid and CPR certification
- Have technical experience consistent with their specialized role on the staff
- Have completed Wilderness Expeditions, Inc. guide training program
- Have exhibited the maturity to be an effective leader of participants

Volunteer Staff for Wilderness Expeditions, Inc. meet or exceed the following qualifications:

- Are at least 16 years of age
- Have exhibited the maturity to be an effective leader among their peers

\* In some instances Field Guides and Staff may be younger if the Outfitter chooses to waive this standard.

### ***Staff Training Program***

All Field Guides and Staff must complete an annual week long training course conducted by Wilderness Expeditions, Inc. Training covers mountaineering skills, backcountry navigation, rappelling, search and rescue procedures, wilderness scenarios, low-impact camping, field cooking, wilderness hygiene, leading group discussion, and basic counseling skills. Experiential training takes places the first weeks of operation.

### ***Additional Staff Requirements***

Employee Contract There shall be an Employment Contract with each staff member with a list of specific responsibilities (job description). This letter of agreement shall be signed by both a representative of Wilderness Expeditions, Inc. (employer) and the staff member (employee).

List of References There shall be at least three (3) references about each staff member attesting to the individual's character and suitability to work with people. The written references or an indication that a reference has been given by phone shall be in the personnel file.

Current Health History Each staff member must complete a current health history and have been examined within the last 12 months by a licensed medical health care professional. A signed examination and current health history shall be maintained in the personnel file.

Written Instructions Each staff member shall be trained and given written instructions as to camp policy when emergencies occur, such as fires, lost participants, and injuries.

### ***Necessary Camp Personnel***

On-site Staff There shall be a senior staff member at the base camp at all times who will be accessible by radio/phone for staff in the field. This person is responsible for coordinating the efforts of securing appropriate medical attention for a participant in the event of an emergency.

Staff on Trail There shall be at least one Field Guide and one Field Staff member with each group of participants while they are 60 minutes hiking distance, or more, from base camp. In the event of an accident requiring the evacuation of an individual, one staff member must remain with the group and one staff member must go with the injured person, unless the injured person is a staff member. In this case, staff will use their best judgment.

### ***Necessary Staff Supervision***

No Unsupervised Participants No participant (under 18 years of age) shall be left without qualified supervision.

Sleeping Areas Sleeping areas for staff shall be near to the sleeping areas of participants, but staff are not to sleep in the same area (or tent) as participants. At no time are participants of the opposite sex to sleep in the same tent.

Solo Times Staff may ask participants to separate themselves from camp for a predetermined period. During these activities, no participant shall be more than 100 yards from camp and will remain close enough to hear staff call them. One staff remains in camp during these periods. Other staff may circulate to make sure participants are safe.

### ***Emergencies***

Emergency Plan on File The Outfitter shall have a written plan for the following emergency situations: accident on base camp property, accident at rappel site, accident on the trail or in a backcountry area, and lost participant. The staff shall be trained to implement this plan.

Emergency Report The Outfitter shall provide each staff member with the proper form(s) for reporting injuries, fatalities, and lost participants.

Emergency Protocol All emergencies shall be reported according to the following protocols:

Minor injury Staff report the injury to a supervisory representative within 12 hours. Staff complete and submit a written report within 72 hours to the Outfitter or appointed representative.

Major injury or illness (any injury requiring a participant or staff to be removed from the backcountry and taken to a hospital/clinic for emergency medical treatment) Staff reports the injury to the Outfitter as soon as possible. Staff complete and submit a written report within 12 hours to the Outfitter or appointed representative. The Outfitter notifies the local hospital (and law enforcement/search and rescue if required).

Fatality (injury resulting in the death of a participant or staff) Staff reports the incident immediately to the Outfitter. Staff complete and submit a written report within 6 hours to the Outfitter or appointed representative. The Outfitter notifies the local hospital and law enforcement/search and rescue.

Lost/Runaway Participant Staff reports the incident immediately to the Outfitter. Staff complete and submit a written report within 6 hours of the time the camper went missing to the Outfitter or appointed representative. Outfitter coordinates the search and reports to law enforcement/search and rescue if efforts by staff have failed.

### ***First Aid, Medications, and Adequate Medical Facilities***

First Aid A fully stocked first aid kit shall be available to all staff while in base camp. A first aid kit shall be carried by at least one staff member to rappel sites and backcountry areas.

Medications Staff are not to administer medications of any kind to participants. The Outfitter's designated medical screener will check each individual's medical history and highlight any medical concerns. These concerns will be communicated to the staff before an individual's departure for backcountry areas. The staff is responsible for knowing which individuals require medication and where medications are located. In the event of a life-threatening emergency, a staff member may assist an individual in taking an oral and/or nebulized medication dispensed by a licensed pharmacist. The medical release forms should be available to staff at all times.

Medical Facilities The Outfitter shall know the location of the closest medical facilities in all areas where activities occur. The Outfitter shall provide the locations of the medical facilities to all staff members. The Outfitter shall provide an adequate facility for separating a sick (and possibly contagious) individual from others.

### ***Fire Safety***

Tents are to be at least thirty feet away from any campfire or open flame. Fuel bottles are to be kept at least ten feet away from stoves and campfires. A staff member should supervise the preparation and starting of all campfires and stoves. Fire extinguishers shall be present in all buildings used by Wilderness Expeditions participants.

### ***Bear Safety***

Special procedures shall be used concerning bears in the backcountry. These procedures are designed to minimize a bear's access to participants in backcountry areas. Participants shall be instructed in the proper disposal of food and waste. Backcountry camps shall be arranged in a way that isolates food supplies and food odors from participants and tent areas. Staff shall give instruction in minimizing the possibility of an individual being isolated and vulnerable to bear attacks. All bear sightings shall be reported by the staff to the Outfitter within 48 hours if staff determines there is no immediate danger. All bear sightings shall be reported immediately to the Outfitter if participants or staff are at risk. The Outfitter should determine how to deal with a bear that persistently threatens the safety of participants or staff. A "problem bear" shall be reported to the Colorado Division of Wildlife within 24 hours of an incident involving a bear and participants or staff. At no time shall a bear be approached or antagonized.

### ***Special Activities***

Rappelling Staff may strongly encourage individuals to participate, but shall not coerce or intimidate an individual who refuses to rappel. Staff shall be trained to properly set up, supervise, and take down a group rappel. The following guidelines shall be followed:

- Only top-rope rappels with a separate belay system shall be used
- Only rappels at sites approved by the Outfitter shall be used
- Individuals must be supervised by at least two staff at all times when rappelling
- Only staff shall be allowed to set up the rappel and belay
- Those rappelling must wear a helmet at all times
- Those supervising the bottom of the rappel must wear a helmet at all times
- All anchors must be backed up
- The rappel line and the belay line shall have separate backup anchors
- Staff shall check each other's anchors and knots before rappelling
- Rappels shall not be conducted when weather conditions make the activity hazardous
- Staff shall visually and physically inspect ropes and other equipment before each rappel
- Damaged ropes and equipment shall be replaced immediately and are not to be used
- A first aid kit shall be available at all times
- Participants must be a safe distance away from the top edge of the rappel and from the bottom of the rappel

Hiking and Backpacking Staff shall be qualified to accompany groups in the backcountry according to Wilderness Expeditions, Inc. personnel policies. They shall meet the following criteria and adhere to the following procedures:

- Hold a current First Aid and CPR certificate
- Know the symptoms and treatment of dehydration and hypothermia
- Observe participants for early diagnosis and treatment of dehydration and hypothermia
- Consider age, physical condition, and experience of group when setting pace
- Select terrain appropriate for the group
- Be able to lead a pre-trip orientation
- Participants should be instructed in at least the following:
  - Fundamental safety procedures on the trail
  - Procedures for a participant if he/she becomes lost
  - Proper health procedures
  - The need for hydration and eating appropriate foods
  - Sanitation procedures on the trail
  - Rules governing the land being hiked over
  - Potentially high-risk areas found on the route
  - Precautions for fire, flash floods, lightning danger, etc.
  - Procedures when encountering wild animals
  - Leave No Trace standards and ethics