



# ALASKA TRAILS

## ALASKA TRAIL STEWARDS VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

### Preparing for a Work Day

#### What to Wear/Bring

1. Daypack
2. Work/hiking boots to protect your feet from sharp tools and the elements. Boots should be comfortable to hike in, as some work days require long hikes
3. Sturdy work pants (no shorts) and work shirt (long-sleeve is best for sun and bug protection and brushing events to prevent scratches) that you don't mind dirtying
4. Snacks/Lunch
5. Water: 2+ liters
6. Rain gear - rain jacket and rain pants
7. Warm layers
8. Prescription medications (including epi-pens)
9. Bug spray and sunscreen
10. Gloves and safety glasses if you prefer your own (otherwise provided)

#### What We Provide

1. Hardhats
2. Eye protection
3. Gloves
4. Ear Protection
5. Light Snacks
6. First Aid Kit
7. Tools

#### What NOT to Bring

1. Drugs or Alcohol
2. Firearms/Weapons
3. Pets
4. Minors (unless it is an event specified for minors and the proper waiver has been completed)

### Work Day Schedule

You can expect the following general schedule for each work day:

#### Meet at the Trailhead

- Sign-in; Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) issued
- Introductions of volunteers and leaders

- Tailgate safety meeting
- Event leaders explain the work plan for the day
- Tools issued

#### Hike to worksite as a group

- The group will stay together
- A “sweeper” will be designated to make sure everyone is accounted for
- Event leaders will carry bear spray

#### Arriving at the worksite

- The worksite will be evaluated for site-specific hazards
- A safe storage location for packs, food, the first aid kit and other emergency equipment will be identified

#### Begin work project!

- The group will stop for morning, afternoon, and lunch breaks (depending on the scheduled length of the event)
- Water breaks should be frequent

#### Leaving the worksite

- A tool-up/turn around time will be decided
- Before leaving, make sure you have all the tools you started with
- Hike back to the trailhead as a group
- Clean, maintain and put away tools
- Debrief

#### **Cancellations/Changes**

- Please arrive at the trailhead by the time stated in the informational email.
- If you have signed up for an event and know you will no longer be able to attend, please email [maya.kaup@alaska-trails.org](mailto:maya.kaup@alaska-trails.org) and [office@alaska-trails.org](mailto:office@alaska-trails.org) as soon as possible.
- Please avoid attending an event without first signing up on our website or arranging otherwise with Alaska Trails staff. We need to make sure we have enough work, tools, and leaders to accommodate all of our volunteers.

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## **Safety Procedures**

### **Tailgate Safety Meetings**

A “Tailgate Safety Meeting” will be conducted at the start of each work day. Working outdoors and performing manual labor is hazardous work, and a tailgate safety meeting is a standard practice to prevent injuries and incidents. Your Event Leader or Land Manager will lead this briefing to prepare you for the day.

## Hazards and Mitigation

	<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<b>Environmental</b>	Weather	Wear proper clothing to stay dry and maintain optimal body temperature; adjust through the day as appropriate
	Vegetation	Recognize and avoid vegetation hazards (e.g., cow parsnip, devil's club, nettles); wear long sleeves when they can't be avoided and to avoid scratches when brushing (in addition to the standard long pants and gloves)
	Steep and unstable terrain	Wear proper footwear; take time for optimal foot placement
	Wildlife encounters	Make noise and be alert; store packs with food close to the group while working; don't wander away from group
	Overhead hazards	Wear hardhat; be alert for overhead hazards; when brushing keep adequate distance from others so falling brush won't impact them
<b>Tools</b>	General tool usage	Use each tool properly as per training; use the right tool for each task (e.g., don't use a shovel as a pry bar); use proper mechanics for body movements (bending, lifting, tool usage); wear PPE (hardhat, eye pro, gloves, ear pro as needed)

	Carrying tools	Unless tool can be safely carried in pack: carry tool close to body and below waist; carry working end forward and down; carry on downslope side of body so it can be cast away in the event of a fall
	Storing tools at worksite	Lay flat on ground above trail with working head away; don't lean against trees or rocks
	Loose tool heads and improperly maintained tools	Alert crew leader of damaged, loose-headed and improperly maintained tools so they can be "red-flagged" and set aside; don't use tool until fixed
	Repetitive strain injuries	Use proper ergonomics; stop at first sign of injury
	Flying debris	Wear appropriate eye protection
	Chainsaw hazards	Only properly trained and authorized personnel may use chainsaws; when swamping, wear PPE including ear protection and maintain safe distance from sawyer; get sawyer's attention from their front; don't walk up behind sawyer
<b>Human</b>	Working in close proximity to others	Maintain more than 6 feet distance between people when using tools; do not leave worksite without informing crew leader; when walking past others working on a trail, walk upslope of them and alert them as you approach

	Poor communication	Communicate clearly; understand work plan and emergency response plan; ask questions as needed for clarification
	Improper or inadequate training for the task	Follow event leader instructions; ask for direction when unsure
	Less than adequate physical condition	Warm up; take breaks; rotate work tasks; ingest adequate food and water; don't work beyond your physical abilities
<b>Medical</b>	Serious chronic medical conditions (e.g., anaphylaxis from yellow jacket stings)	Carry appropriate meds; inform Crew Leader if there is a potential for an incident
	Injuries	Inform Crew Leader immediately so first aid can be administered

**Debriefing**

Participants should debrief with their event leaders after each event and discuss the day's accomplishments as well as any incidents that occurred. The group should talk about what they would do differently to be more safe and efficient. After an incident or near miss, the group should stop and debrief, evaluating whether or not the work can be continued and what needs to change to prevent another incident.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Alaska Trails will provide any required Personal Protective Equipment for work days. While it may be safe to perform some trail work tasks without a given item of PPE, circumstances can change in a moment. Thus the safest practice is to wear all standard PPE at all times.

The following PPE is required at all times:

Hardhat: Required at all times while working; also required when overhead hazards are present when hiking to and from the work site or during breaks. The hardhat liner should be adjusted so that the hardhat doesn't fall off when bending over.

Gloves: Required for all trail tasks and anytime handling, transporting, or maintaining tools.

Eye Protection: Required at all times while working and while hiking through brush. Eye protection must be ANSI approved; sunglasses and eyeglasses do not provide sufficient protection. Over eyewear eye protection is available.

Long pants: Required at all times to prevent scratches and cuts on legs.

### **Footwear**

Boots: Sturdy hiking/work boots with ankle support strongly recommended.

Rubber boots: Are acceptable for work days with wet/muddy conditions.

Low-cut hikers or tennis shoes: Are acceptable for tasks such as lopping and hauling materials but not for swinging, chopping, or grubbing.

Open-toed shoes: Not permitted for work days.

### **First Aid**

It's everyone's responsibility to avoid medical emergencies. It's about situational awareness, self-awareness, and accident prevention. Some project sites may be several hours away from definitive medical care, and weather conditions could potentially delay an evacuation for even longer. Accidents can take on a much more serious nature in these settings and accident prevention is the highest priority. Notify the Event Leader promptly if an incident occurs so it can be properly addressed.

A First Aid Kit will be on-hand at all events; its location will be designated by the Event Leader and made known to all participants. Participants with First Aid training will be identified in the Tailgate Safety Meeting at the beginning of each work day.

### **Health Concerns**

If you have health concerns or your physical condition affects your ability to perform specific types of work, please notify the Alaska Trails staff before the event ([maya.kaup@alaska-trails.org](mailto:maya.kaup@alaska-trails.org) and [office@alaska-trails.org](mailto:office@alaska-trails.org)) and the Event Leader at the trailhead. If you rely on medications (including epinephrine) or orthotic devices, make sure you bring them to the project site.

### **Communication**

The Event Leader will carry a cell phone. Land managers will carry radios, satellite phones, or InReach devices if cell service is unavailable at the worksite.

### **Emergency Action Plan**

An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is a resource in case of emergency that the Event Leader will carry. The EAP contains emergency contact information as well as evacuation information.

### **Culture of Safety**

All Alaska Trails employees and volunteers should foster a culture of safety, where following safe working procedures is the norm. Any participant in an Alaska Trail Stewards event should feel empowered to speak up if they feel conditions are unsafe. Any participant has the right and responsibility to report safety concerns, to refuse any task they feel uncomfortable with, and to stop operations if they feel conditions are unsafe.