

Handcart Trek Reenactments

Guidelines for Leaders



Published by
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Salt Lake City, Utah

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English approval: 12/16
PD10052956

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A handcart trek family kneels in prayer on the pampas of Argentina.

Purposes of Handcart Trek Reenactments

From 1856 to 1860, about 3,000 Latter-day Saints pulled handcarts across the American plains to gather in the Salt Lake Valley. These pioneers trekked more than a thousand miles through heat and cold; through mud, sand, and sometimes snow; and through rivers and over mountains. They faced trials that required great faith and perseverance.

To help youth learn from the experiences of the handcart pioneers, stakes and wards may choose to plan handcart trek reenactments for youth conferences. Treks provide powerful opportunities for youth to:

- Strengthen testimonies.
- Build unity.
- Do family history.
- Learn and appreciate Church history.
- Feel gratitude for the sacrifices of the pioneers and the heritage they provided.
- Appreciate their blessings more fully.
- Seek and find guidance to overcome challenges.
- Focus on serving and rescuing others.
- Learn core gospel principles.

Treks that focus on gospel principles that the pioneers exemplified will have lasting impressions on the youth. Some of these principles are summarized as follows:

Faith. Faith in Jesus Christ sustained Latter-day Saint pioneers as they entered the waters of baptism,

journeyed to America, endured adversities, and helped build Zion. Pioneer treks can help today's youth develop this same faith. Youth can also learn how to be modern pioneers as they establish faith-centered lives and traditions.

Obedience. In gathering to the American West, the pioneers were obeying the call of a prophet, Brigham Young. Today's handcart treks can help youth learn the importance of obeying God's commandments and following the teachings of His prophets.

Charity. The stories of the pioneers are replete with examples of people who showed charity to each other in the most adverse circumstances. In trek reenactments, youth have many opportunities to experience the blessings of giving and receiving charity.

Sacrifice. Latter-day Saint converts made great sacrifices by leaving homelands, families, and friends to gather to Zion. When tragedy struck the Willie and Martin handcart companies in 1856, Church members made great sacrifices to rescue and care for these Saints. As youth participate in handcart treks, they will have opportunities to make sacrifices and to experience the blessings that come through sacrifice.

Persevering through adversity. The handcart pioneers' trek was arduous. Some of these Saints faced harsh winter storms; had inadequate clothing, shelter, and food; and suffered illness and death. Clinging to their faith in God and their vision of Zion, they persevered through the most daunting conditions. Treks can help today's youth learn to persevere, turn to God in times of trial, and gain a testimony that He will help bear their burdens.

Although persevering through adversity is a worthwhile purpose of trek reenactments, leaders should not contrive ways to make reenactments more difficult than they already are, such as by limiting food and water. Rather than trying to replicate the trials the handcart pioneers faced, leaders should plan an experience that would be best for their own group.

"Brothers and sisters, join with us and begin now to prepare for a spiritual journey . . . by walking in the footsteps of our beloved pioneers in every land. We must be sure that the legacy of faith received from them is never lost. Let their heroic lives touch our hearts, and especially the hearts of our youth, so the fire of true testimony and unwavering love for the Lord and His Church will blaze brightly within each one of us as it did in our faithful pioneers."

—Elder M. Russell Ballard

"Faith in Every Footstep"

Ensign, Nov. 1996, 25

Planning a Handcart Trek

When planning a handcart trek, leaders prayerfully consider the needs of the youth. They review the purposes of trek reenactments, as outlined in the previous section, and plan how the trek can help fulfill some of these purposes in the lives of the youth. Questions that can guide the planning include:

- Why are we doing a trek?
- What do we want the youth to learn?
- What gospel principles should the trek focus on?
- What will the theme and objectives be?

The theme and objectives should help the youth relate what they learn from the trek experience and the pioneer stories to their own lives.

Treks require substantial preparation to achieve meaningful purposes with minimal risks. They normally require more planning and resources than other youth conferences. Planning usually begins at least a year in advance.

Stake presidencies oversee all aspects of stake treks, and bishoprics oversee all aspects of ward treks. They call and assign others to do most of the planning and activities, but treks are conducted under their direction. They approve the trek’s theme, objectives, and plans. These leaders provide priesthood oversight and help deepen the spiritual experience. They also ensure that Church policies are followed.

Stake handcart treks are planned and carried out by the stake Aaronic Priesthood–Young Women committee, under the direction of the stake presidency (see *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 18.3.9). The stake presidency invites youth to attend the committee’s meetings and to work with the committee in planning the trek (see *Handbook 2*, 8.15.5, 10.10.5). Ward handcart treks are planned and carried out by the bishopric youth committee, with approval from the stake presidency (see *Handbook 2*, 18.2.9). Other people assist as outlined in “Callings, Assignments, and Roles” (see pages 5–9).

Treks are usually for youth ages 14 through 18. The youth should help plan and carry out all aspects of the trek. For example, they help determine the theme and are involved in the publicity, music, activities, and menu planning. They also help plan and carry out supporting events before and after the trek.

If a stake or ward does not have enough youth for a trek, they could join with another stake or ward. In that case, one member of the stake presidency or bishopric from each stake or ward should provide priesthood oversight in planning and carrying out the trek. For guidelines for multistake activities, see *Handbook 2*, 13.3.1.

The following logistical questions are important to address when planning a handcart trek:

- Where can we go?
- When should we go?
- Where can we get handcarts? Will we have to build our own?
- Who will be the leader(s)?

- Who else will be involved?
- What is the budget? (See *Handbook 2*, 13.2.8–9.)
- What preventative measures can we take to ensure that our trek is carried out safely?

“It is good to look to the past to gain appreciation for the present and perspective for the future. It is good to look upon the virtues of those who have gone before, to gain strength for whatever lies ahead. It is good to reflect upon the work of those who labored so hard and gained so little in this world, but out of whose dreams and early plans, so well nurtured, has come a great harvest of which we are the beneficiaries. Their tremendous example can become a compelling motivation for us all, for each of us is a pioneer in his own life, often in his own family, and many of us pioneer daily in trying to establish a gospel foothold in distant parts of the world.”

—President Gordon B. Hinckley
 “The Faith of the Pioneers”
Ensign, July 1984, 3

During the planning, adults and youth give careful attention to the following:

- **Spiritual development.** Treks should be planned to strengthen testimonies and foster personal growth, not just to be recreational activities. A trek should provide opportunities for youth to apply gospel principles and feel support in living them.
- **Physical preparation.** Treks require physical stamina. Each participant should be encouraged to eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly, and get sufficient rest to prepare for the trek.
- **Physical and mental challenges.** Some youth and adults who participate may have physical or mental challenges. Leaders make preparations to accommodate any special needs for food, medication, equipment, supervision, and safety for these individuals.



Youth pull handcarts along Wyoming's Sweetwater River.

- **Safety and health.** Efforts to create a safe trek experience should be integrated throughout the planning process. For guidance on safety and health matters, see pages 17–25.

If appropriate preparations are made and the trek is properly conducted, it can be a life-changing experience for the youth and the leaders.

To avoid placing undue burden on leaders and finances, a stake or ward should not hold a trek every year.

All trek plans should follow the Church policies outlined in chapters 13 and 21 of *Handbook 2*. For youth conference guidelines, see *Handbook 2*, 13.4. For funding and travel policies, see 13.2.8 and 13.6.24.

Trek Schedule

Trek schedules are determined by stake or ward leaders. These leaders seek inspiration in deciding which activities to do and when to do them (see “Trek Activities” on pages 12–15).

Trek Sites

The Church owns several properties in the United States and one in Argentina that may be used for handcart treks. To plan a trek at one of these sites, a stake or ward leader contacts a site representative to obtain information about reservations and fees, availability of handcarts and other resources, leadership training, and site-specific rules. For information about these sites, see treks.lds.org.

Treks may also be held on public or private land. When such sites are used, leaders should obtain the necessary approvals and ensure that trekkers respect the rights and property of others.

Leaders should know in advance any camping and fire regulations for their trek site, and during the trek they ensure that participants comply with these regulations. The safety and health leader ensures that the use of fire, where permitted, is appropriate for existing conditions.

Leaders should know where the nearest law enforcement, medical, and emergency facilities are located and how to contact them.

Callings, Assignments, and Roles

Because handcart treks usually require more planning and resources than other youth conferences, stake leaders call and assign others—including youth—to help the Aaronic Priesthood–Young Women committee plan and carry out stake treks. The bishopric calls and assigns others to help the bishopric youth committee plan and carry out ward treks.

This section outlines callings and assignments for trek reenactments. *Stake presidencies and bishoprics use discretion and inspiration in determining (1) which of these callings and assignments are needed and (2) how the callings and assignments are best organized for their trek.*

Chairperson(s)

The stake presidency or bishopric may assign the Young Men and Young Women presidencies to serve as chairpersons for the trek. However, because of the time, energy, and commitment required for a trek, many stake presidencies or bishoprics call an individual or a husband and wife to be the trek chairperson(s). The chairperson(s) has the following responsibilities:

- Serve as member(s) of the stake Aaronic Priesthood–Young Women committee or the bishopric youth committee while the trek is being planned and until its follow-up activities have concluded.
- Establish the trek’s theme, objectives, and schedule by working with (1) the stake presidency and other members of the stake Aaronic Priesthood–Young Women committee (including youth who are invited to participate on the committee) or (2) the bishop and other members of the bishopric youth committee.
- Oversee all aspects of preparing for the trek, such as training and advising leaders, planning pretrek activities, and coordinating the efforts of leaders and committees.
- Oversee all aspects of the trek itself, such as coordinating the efforts of others, maintaining the schedule (or adjusting it as needed), answering questions, resolving problems, and helping participants have a meaningful experience.

“I will never get over being thankful to [the pioneers]; I hope you never get over being thankful to them. I hope that we will always remember them and let us read again and again, and read to our children or our children’s children, the accounts of those who suffered so much.”

—President Gordon B. Hinckley
In *Church News*, July 31, 1999, 5

Trail Boss

A trail boss leads participants along the trek route. A member of the stake presidency or bishopric is often assigned to serve in this position, but any qualified man or woman could be assigned.

This person should be familiar with the route and also be comfortable leading a large group of people outdoors. He or she should be in good physical condition and be able to relate well with youth. The trail boss sets the pace for the handcarts, usually an average of about



Youth gather for a devotional during their handcart trek reenactment.

two miles an hour. He or she also maintains communication between the trekkers and the support staff.

Company Captains (optional)

When a trek involves many participants, company captains may be assigned to oversee four or five trek “families.” Company captains:

- Work closely with trek chairperson(s) and the trail boss to keep these leaders informed about the condition of the companies.
- Communicate instructions and other information from the trek chairperson(s) and trail boss to their companies.
- Help with activities.

Company captains need to be in good physical condition, feel comfortable in the outdoors, and enjoy working with youth.

Family Group Leaders (“Ma’s” and “Pa’s”)

Each trek “family” consists of 8 to 10 members who are assigned by trek leaders (see page 10). A married couple (or two single adults) is called to oversee each family. These leaders are usually referred to as “Ma” and “Pa.” For more information, see pages 10–12.

Family Youth Leaders (“Big Brothers” and “Big Sisters”); optional)

One or two exemplary, mature youth could be designated as youth leaders for each trek family. Under the direction of the Ma and Pa, youth leaders may help lead the family’s activities, games, devotionals, meal preparation, and so on.

Safety and Health Leader

The safety and health leader provides a safety briefing to all participants before the trek and provides a safety briefing at the beginning of each day. This person also:

- Monitors the current and anticipated weather conditions.
- Oversees all aspects of fire safety, water crossings, and uphill and downhill travel.
- Ensures that participants have access to drinking water, food, and proper sanitation.
- Communicates with the chairperson(s), medical team, and other leaders about safety and health matters.

The safety and health leader reports directly to the chairperson(s).

Medical Team

Licensed health care professionals should be recruited early and be present for the entire trek. At least one physician or other skilled health care professional should participate in the trek. In addition, one nurse or emergency medical technician (EMT) is recommended for every 50 to 100 participants. It may be helpful to have some members of the group be trained in wilderness first aid (see page 22).

Along with the safety and health leader, members of the medical team monitor the current and anticipated weather conditions. They communicate with the safety and health leader and other trek leaders about any weather-related medical concerns.

Before the trek, the medical team should train adult and youth leaders in how to (1) plan activities with minimal risk, (2) prevent accidents and injuries, and (3) recognize early symptoms of illness.

During the trek, the medical team should be prepared with all the medicine, emergency medical equipment, release forms (see page 21), and transportation needed

for their group. It is especially important that they be prepared to handle issues related to heat and cold.

Some members of the medical team walk with participants to help with minor needs and observe conditions, while other members follow in a vehicle that is out of sight, ready to help if needed.

Medical team members should wear something that makes them easy to identify, such as a red armband or hat. They should be able to communicate with each other and with trek leaders during the trek.

For more information about safety and medical matters, see pages 17–25.

Food Committee

The food committee plans the menu for the trek, assisted by some of the youth, and purchases the food. Committee members may prepare the meals for the entire group, or trek families could prepare their own meals using food that the committee provides. To keep food safe, committee members should follow the guidelines in the Food Safety Fact Sheet on safety.lds.org.

Equipment and Transportation Committee

Members of the equipment and transportation committee arrange for a sufficient number of handcarts (and oversee building them if necessary), ensure that clean water is available, and secure all needed equipment (including portable toilets if necessary). Members of this committee may also be assigned to make travel arrangements (for travel policies, see *Handbook 2*, 13.6.24).

Family History Coordinator(s)

One or more family history coordinators are called to help youth research their ancestors (or another person's ancestors) before the trek. Ideally, each young man and

young woman will have a family history story to share. If possible, trek participants are encouraged to do temple work for one or more of their ancestors.



Music Leader

A music leader is called to prepare and lead songs for the trek and related activities.

Historian(s)

One or more historians are called to record events along the trail and to take pictures or videos. If a storytelling coordinator, photographer, and videographer are called, they work under the direction of the historian.

Storytelling Coordinator (optional)

A storytelling coordinator may be called to research pioneer stories to share or reenact during the trek. Working under the direction of the historian, he or she could assign each person a handcart pioneer to learn about (or help each person identify a handcart pioneer to learn about; see “Walking for a Pioneer” on page 15). He or she could also prepare stories and scripts for

vignettes during the trek. It is important that these stories be historically accurate. For a collection of such stories, see treks.lds.org.

Photographer(s) and Videographer(s) (optional)

One or more photographers and videographers may be called to make a visual record of the trek. Working under the direction of the historian, they may put together a video presentation to show after the trek and for future reference. This effort should not be elaborate or expensive.

Ward Coordinators (optional)

For stake treks, it is often helpful for each bishopric to assign a ward coordinator. He or she keeps ward members informed about pretrek activities, oversees the registration of ward members, helps with publicity, and assists in other ways as needed, such as collecting letters from parents for “solo” time (see pages 14–15).

Trail Walkers (optional)

Some leaders may be assigned to serve as trail walkers. These leaders often include the stake presidency, bishopric, Young Men and Young Women leaders, and others. Instead of being assigned to specific families, they move among the entire group, giving encouragement and support. They also help families or individuals who might be struggling.

Dance Instructor(s) (optional)

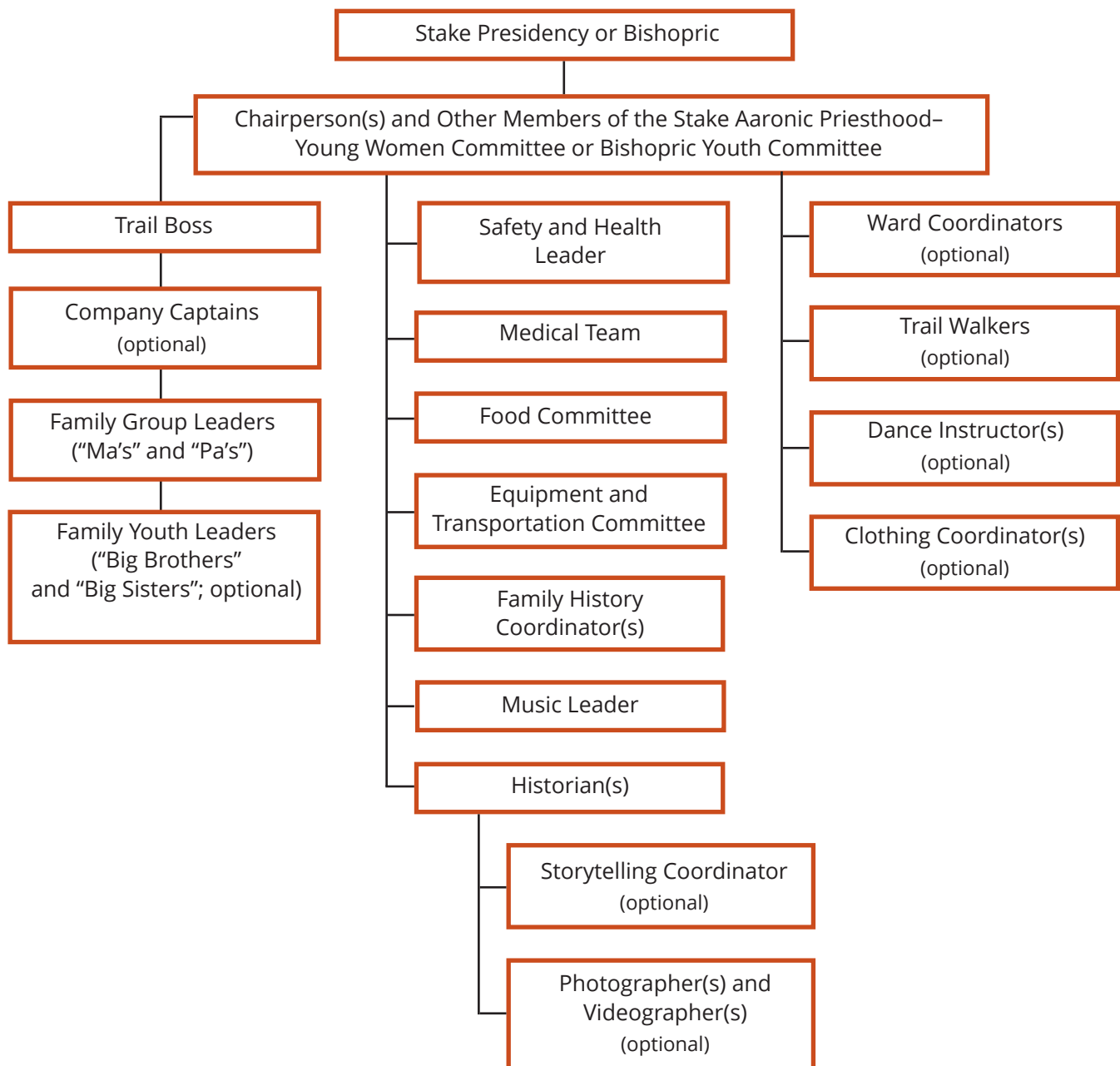
One or more dance instructors may be assigned to teach pioneer dances to the youth and to oversee a dance activity during the trek.

Clothing Coordinator(s) (optional)

One or more clothing coordinators may be assigned to help participants obtain or make pioneer clothing. For simple clothing patterns, see pages 28–33.

Trek Organization Chart

This chart outlines callings and assignments for handcart trek reenactments. Stake presidencies and bishoprics use discretion and inspiration in determining (1) which of these callings and assignments are needed and (2) how the callings and assignments are best organized for their trek.



“Family” Organization

The trek chairperson(s) works with other trek leaders to assign each young man and young woman to a “family” of 8 to 10 members, depending on the number of youth and the availability of handcarts. Leaders seek inspiration as they assign youth to trek families. Each family should have a variety of ages and physical abilities. Families should also have a good balance of young men and young women. They are led by a “Ma” and “Pa.”



Calling and Roles of Family Group Leaders

(“Ma’s” and “Pa’s”)

Priesthood leaders consider the calling of family group leaders (“Ma’s” and “Pa’s”) very carefully and as directed by the Spirit. These adults will help set the tone of spirituality and unity that is essential in making the trek successful. They should be able to relate to youth and teach effectively. They also need to be able to make the time commitment and have the stamina to participate fully in the trek.

Roles of Ma’s and Pa’s

- **Enhance the spiritual experience.** The Ma and Pa prepare themselves spiritually and seek the Spirit in all they do and say. One of their most important responsibilities is helping the youth benefit spiritually from the trek. Music, stories, testimonies, expressions of love, and family discussions help create an environment in which the Spirit can teach and inspire youth.
- **Build unity.** The Ma and Pa strive to help members of their group become unified and develop supportive friendships. They ask group members to stay together rather than join with other groups. To help build unity, the Ma and Pa model in their relationship the skills they hope the youth will acquire or increase. They work together in harmony, support one another, and have fun together.
- **Challenge youth to participate wholeheartedly.** The Ma and Pa make every effort to help the youth in their group become engaged in the trek. Rather than doing most of the work themselves, they help all group members work together and make contributions. The Ma and Pa encourage youth to step outside of their comfort zones, although they must not require them to do anything against their will.

- **Set expectations.** As the trek begins, the Ma and Pa discuss expectations with their group. For example, they could explain the importance of working together to make the trek experience beneficial for everyone. They help the youth understand that this doesn't happen automatically but will require the efforts of each person. Another expectation to discuss is the importance of showing courtesy and respect to each other.
- **Keep things positive.** The Ma and Pa set a good example of being positive. They should be loving, humble, and firm, while also having fun. If one or more youth are detracting from the experience of others, the Ma and Pa counsel with them. Most treks have challenges, but the Ma and Pa can help the group face them positively and prayerfully.
- **Help the family youth leaders ("big brothers" and "big sisters").** If the family has youth leaders, the Ma and Pa support them in fulfilling their responsibilities. These responsibilities could include helping lead the family in games, devotionals, meal preparation, and problem solving.
- **Be there.** The Ma and Pa should be present for the entire trek and walk with their group the entire way. They seek to understand the thoughts, feelings, and personalities of each group member. They talk with and listen to the youth individually and as a group.
- **Be flexible.** Some families are outgoing and lively, while others are quiet and reserved. The Ma and Pa guide their group's development according to the personalities of those in the group, with the assistance of the Spirit.
- **Lead family discussions.** The Ma and Pa encourage group members to share their thoughts and feelings about their experiences. They encourage group discussions in formal and informal settings, such as mealtimes, campfires, and devotionals. The Ma and Pa also share their own experiences, talk about their own feelings, and testify of truth. Suggestions for leading discussions are provided on page 12.
- **Maintain hydration and encourage safety.** The Ma and Pa ensure that all group members (including themselves) drink plenty of water. They also encourage youth to be safe and to

protect themselves from injury and illness. They observe each of their youth to ensure that they are not sick or unduly struggling. If any questions or concerns arise, they contact a member of the medical team immediately.

- **Keep track of participants.** The Ma and Pa keep track of the youth in their group at all times (see page 20).

"I wish to remind everyone . . . that the comforts we have, the peace we have, and, most important, the faith and knowledge of the things of God that we have, were bought with a terrible price by those who have gone before us. Sacrifice has always been a part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The crowning element of our faith is our conviction of our living God, the Father of us all, and of His Beloved Son, the Redeemer of the world."

—President Gordon B. Hinckley

"Our Mission of Saving"

Ensign, Nov. 1991, 54

Preparation of Ma's and Pa's Spiritual Preparation

Pioneer treks require spiritual preparation. Suggestions include:

- Having personal and family prayer each day.
- Listening to and heeding the Spirit.
- Studying the Book of Mormon and other scriptures regularly, giving special attention to the gospel principles that can be taught on trek.
- Going to the temple regularly.
- Learning about Church history, ancestors, and the handcart pioneers.
- Improving teaching and listening skills.

Physical Preparation

Pioneer treks require physical stamina, which leaders can develop by obeying the Word of Wisdom, eating a healthy diet, and exercising regularly. Physical preparation cannot be completed in a short period of time. Ma's and Pa's should be prepared to walk three miles an hour and be capable of walking up to 15 miles a day while helping pull a heavy handcart over rough terrain.

Basic Skills

Ma's and Pa's should have the following skills or consider learning them: fire building, knot tying, rain protection on the trail and in camp, outdoor meal preparation, basic first aid (see pages 21–25), and no-trace camping and trekking (see page 26).

Suggestions for Leading Discussions

Both formal and informal discussions can help youth ponder the trek experience and the gospel in their lives. For a formal discussion, the Ma and Pa could gather their group and sit in a circle. The Ma or Pa could share a pioneer story, ask one of the youth to share a story, or share thoughts about an experience from the day. The Ma and Pa could then ask questions to start the discussion. These questions should invite reflection and introspection. Questions could include:

- What parallels do you see between your own life and the experiences of the pioneers?
- In what ways are you a pioneer?
- How do you feel about the trek so far?
- What are you learning from this experience?
- What challenges do the youth of the Church face today? How can learning about the experiences of the pioneers help you face your challenges?
- How can the decisions you make now affect your future? How can your decisions affect other people? How can they affect the generations that come after you?

To conclude, someone could share scriptures that are relevant to the discussion, and then the Ma, Pa, or one or more of the youth could share their testimonies.

If the Ma and Pa struggle to get the discussion started, they could begin at a point in the circle and invite each person to respond to a question. The Ma and Pa could then follow up with questions that encourage further discussion and application. Everyone should be encouraged to share, but no one should feel required.

The Ma and Pa listen carefully to what each person says and give reinforcement. Youth should know that their ideas are heard and valued. Generally the Ma and Pa should do more listening than talking.

The Ma and Pa ensure that participants do not criticize, judge, or blame others. If negative feelings about others are expressed, the Ma and Pa let the group know that the intent of discussions is for individuals to share insights and feelings about themselves—and about others if those feelings are edifying.

Trek Activities

As adults and youth develop a schedule for the trek, they plan activities that will build faith and foster unity. They schedule these activities according to local needs and circumstances. Activities should be linked to the trek's theme and objectives.

This section outlines some activity ideas. Each of these activities can contribute to a successful trek, but they are not all necessary. Stake and ward leaders may also plan other appropriate activities. Leaders should be careful not to overschedule. *Stake presidencies and bishoprics use discretion and inspiration in determining which activities to include.*



Young women participate in a women's pull in Córdoba, Argentina.

Pulling Handcarts

A primary activity of handcart treks is pulling a loaded handcart along a trail. This activity is typically part of each day of the trek, with at least one day in which the youth pull handcarts for a long and appropriately difficult period. Pulling handcarts helps the youth discover their own strengths and the strengths of others. It can also help them increase their faith in and dependence on the Lord. Treks help youth learn to work together to accomplish a goal they could not do alone.

Spiritual Activities

Leaders could schedule regular times for participants to pause to ponder their experiences and seek the Spirit. Some examples may include devotionals, testimony meetings, scripture study time, family home evening, and journal writing.

Music

The sacred hymns of the Church add spirituality to a handcart trek. Other songs the pioneers would have sung can add fun. Some stakes and wards organize youth choirs for their trek. Youth could also share their musical talents in other ways. Music that is inspirational and fun enriches the trek.

Women's Pull

Some stakes and wards include a women's pull as part of their handcart trek. In this activity, the young women pull the handcarts alone for a distance while the young men watch quietly. Before the women's pull, leaders could establish a historical context by explaining that many women handcart pioneers pulled handcarts without the assistance of men, sometimes due to the death or illness of their husbands and sons.

To prepare for the women’s pull, the young women and young men are typically separated and hear brief talks from their leaders. As guided by the Spirit, leaders could discuss topics such as sacrifice, honoring the priesthood, respecting women, preparing for motherhood and fatherhood, living a virtuous life, or preparing for missionary service. After these brief gatherings, the young women pull the loaded handcarts over a difficult part of the trail. The young men watch silently and respectfully, either from a distance or beside the trail.

The women’s pull can be a very important part of the trek. If the hearts of the youth have been prepared by the Spirit, this activity can help teach gospel principles such as faith, obedience, love, and sacrifice. The young women will learn that they can accomplish many things by relying on their own strength and their faith in the Lord. The young men will long remember the effort and strength of the young women. Participants will also have a greater appreciation for the accomplishments of the pioneers.

During the women’s pull, leaders should (1) watch for signs of distress in those pulling the handcarts and (2) be prepared to prevent injuries and runaway carts.

Symbolizing the absence of the young men by calling them to serve in the Mormon Battalion is historically inaccurate and is therefore inappropriate. The march of the Mormon Battalion occurred 10 years before handcart travel began.

Letter from Parents and “Solo” Time

Stake or ward leaders could invite parents to write a letter to their son or daughter that will be delivered sometime during the trek. The youth typically are not told in advance that their parents are writing this letter. Parents are invited to express their love, testimony, and other thoughts and feelings.

Often the letters are given to youth to read during a “solo” time—a time when they can be alone. Before the letters are delivered, the stake president, bishop, or someone he designates could teach the youth about personal revelation and listening for the promptings of the Holy Ghost to guide them in making important decisions. The speaker could also suggest how to use the “solo” time. Ideas include prayer, personal evaluation, journal writing, and meditation.



After these remarks, the young men and young women are given their letters. Each of them finds a quiet place to read the letter, think about what it says, and listen for the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

Leaders ensure that each young man and young woman receives a letter. A grandparent, bishop, home teacher, or other influential adult could write the letter if a parent cannot.

Although youth should have privacy for their “solo” time, leaders instruct them to stay close to the group to be safe. Leaders also ensure that all youth remain in sight during “solo” time.

“In recent years, the number of treks has increased in areas that are far removed from the handcart sites on the Mormon Trail. In our experiences with treks in Argentina, we have seen that the stories and spirit of the faithful handcart pioneers reach across languages, cultures, and borders and profoundly touch the hearts of trek participants, both young and old. Treks teach the principles of the gospel to youth around the world and inspire them to be better members of the Church.”

—Elder and Sister Flinders

Former Trek Coordinators for Argentina

Reenacting Situations and Sharing Stories

During the trek, leaders could help the youth reenact situations that were common along the trail, such as a mother carrying an infant, an injury that requires a youth to use crutches or be carried, or a handcart that breaks down, requiring the youth to carry the cargo themselves for a while.

Participants could also share stories that will help each other appreciate the faith, obedience, and sacrifice of the pioneers. For a collection of historically accurate pioneer stories, see treks.lds.org.

Reenacting deaths or violence—including mob violence—is not to be included as part of treks.

Walking for a Pioneer

In advance, youth could research or be given the name and brief biography of a handcart pioneer (see “Story-telling Coordinator” on page 8). They could be asked to study the biography with the idea that they will walk on trek as if they were that person and will try to do the things that he or she would have done on the journey to Zion. They could also share their pioneer’s story with the other youth.

Games and Dancing

Leaders could schedule opportunities for the youth to play simple games, either in their groups or as an entire stake or ward. Leaders could also schedule time for the youth to learn pioneer dances.

Clothing

Where possible, leaders and youth are encouraged to wear pioneer-style clothing. Doing so helps participants immerse themselves in the trek experience. It can also foster a sense of unity among the youth and help remove social barriers that may exist.

In obtaining or making pioneer clothing, leaders and youth should not spend excessive time or money. Many items can be found in existing wardrobes or at secondhand stores. For simple clothing patterns, see pages 28–33.

Clothing styles and fabrics need to be appropriate for the anticipated climate and weather conditions to help avoid overheating—or to stay warm.

Ideally, young women’s blouses should be lightweight and long-sleeved, and their skirts should reach the midcalf, with bloomers or shorts underneath to prevent chafing. Lightweight, long-sleeved shirts and comfortable, loose-fitting pants are recommended for the young men. Cotton fabrics are generally recommended.



Youth from Buenos Aires begin their handcart trek at the Kilgruman farm.

To help reduce the likelihood of blisters, participants are encouraged to wear (1) walking or hiking shoes that are broken in and (2) two pairs of socks at a time. Ideally the inner sock is thin and synthetic, while the outer sock is wool or a wool blend. Socks that wick away moisture are the most helpful. Socks that are a wool-synthetic blend can also help reduce the potential for blisters.

To help protect from sun and insects, participants are encouraged to wear long sleeves, wide-brimmed hats or bonnets, and sunglasses.

Clothing should be appropriate for the weather conditions that might occur. Trekkers should bring protective over-clothing if rain or cold weather is likely. If they get wet, they should put on dry clothes as soon as possible.

The wearing of white clothing to represent deceased persons or angels from the other side of the veil is not to be included as part of treks.

Building or Obtaining Handcarts

For treks at Church-owned agricultural properties that allow treks, handcarts are provided at the site. For treks at other locations, stakes or wards may rent handcarts, borrow them from other units, or build their own. For a sample plan for building handcarts, see page 34.

Historical Accounts

Pioneer stories, especially firsthand accounts of handcart pioneers, are very effective in helping youth learn the lessons of faith, obedience, and sacrifice that the pioneers exemplified. Leaders ensure that any stories that are told and reenacted during the trek are historically accurate. For a collection of historically accurate pioneer stories, see treks.lds.org.

Safety and Health

Because handcart treks are held in an outdoor setting and involve strenuous activity, they have inherent risks. Before the trek, all participants—adults and youth—should prepare well so they can be safe and healthy. During the trek, leaders should take all necessary precautions to help participants be safe and healthy. Leaders focus on preventing illness or injury and on being prepared to provide treatment if necessary.

All leaders should avoid any situation in which an adult and a youth are alone together, unless they are in a visible location with others nearby.

Safety Preparations before Trek

All leaders, including Ma's and Pa's, should be trained to monitor their own well-being and hydration, as well as the well-being and hydration of other participants. Leaders should be trained to look for symptoms of injuries and illnesses and to understand correct treatments. Injuries and illnesses could include dehydration, heat exhaustion, hypothermia, asthma, blisters, cuts, sprains, insect stings and bites, snakebites, allergic reactions, eye irritation, and broken bones. Leaders should also be aware of and prepared for weather-related hazards.

It is recommended that before the trek, leaders, parents, and youth attend a meeting in which details about the activity are outlined. This meeting should also be used to teach safe practices (including those in these guidelines) and to emphasize the importance of taking physical preparation seriously.

For more information, see the “Tracy’s Trek” video series on safety.lds.org. Leaders should share these videos with all trek participants.

Physical Fitness

Treks are physically demanding. Participants should take seriously any preparation they may need to make so they are physically fit enough to safely hike the distances involved, unless they have a limiting disability. Each youth and each adult should be prepared to walk three miles an hour and be capable of walking up to 15 miles a day while helping pull a heavy handcart. Taking practice hikes and preparing to walk uphill will also be beneficial. Many participants will benefit from improving their physical fitness before a trek.

For more information, see “Get in Shape” on safety.lds.org. Leaders might consider sharing this video with all trek participants.

Weather

If the weather is expected to be extreme—either dangerously hot and humid or dangerously cold—leaders should consider alternate activities or revise the itinerary to reduce exposure. In some cases, late adjustments may be required for the safety of participants.

Weather can change rapidly, so leaders and participants should be prepared for both hot and cold conditions.

There is always the possibility of rain during a trek.

Especially in mountainous or wilderness areas, storms can be life threatening. The two greatest dangers from rainstorms are lightning and hypothermia.

If rain is expected, precautions should be taken to keep people dry. Jackets and rainwear should be kept handy. Participants should have rain boots or an extra pair of shoes and socks. Also, wet pants can cause chafing if considerable walking is done after getting wet. Chafing is more frequent in hot temperatures.

If a severe storm occurs on the first day, groups should be prepared to change their itinerary. Storms may necessitate complete route changes.

For more information, see the Severe Weather Planning Fact Sheet and the Heat Illness Prevention Fact Sheet on safety.lds.org.

Lightning

Before leaving for the trek, participants should be instructed on what to do in a lightning storm. Because light travels much faster than sound, the time between a lightning bolt and thunderclap will tell how far away the lightning is. Each 5-second count equals one mile. If the time between a lightning flash and a thunderclap is 15 seconds or less (three miles or closer), a lightning strike may be imminent, and leaders should take precautions. Other signs of an imminent lightning strike include tingling of the skin or hair standing on end.

Lightning typically strikes the tallest object in the area and is attracted to metal objects. Leaders should move participants away from their handcarts and toward the lowest spot in the area. Everyone should spread out as much as possible to minimize the chance of multiple people being struck. Participants should keep their feet close together and stay as low as possible, with no other part of their body touching the ground. Minimizing body contact with the ground reduces the risk of being hit. If someone is struck, the medical team treats and transports the person immediately.

For more information, see “Sam Cloud: Lightning Safety” on safety.lds.org. Leaders might consider sharing this video with all trek participants.

Safety on the Trail

The following guidelines can help participants protect everyone’s safety while on the trail:

- Stay behind the trail boss, who sets the pace for the trek. The pace is usually an average of about two miles an hour so that everyone can keep up.
- Stay with your group and help pull the handcart.

- Every 20 to 30 minutes, stop for a short water break, allowing time for everyone to drink.
- Stay on the trails or in approved areas.
- Immediately communicate with the trail boss, the safety and health leader, and the medical staff if there is any type of emergency.
- Watch out for cattle and wildlife along the trail and don’t bother them.

Safety in Stream or River Crossings

The following guidelines can help participants be safe during stream or river crossings:

- Avoid water crossings if storms are predicted, especially upstream.
- Look around for the safest location, which may not be the trail crossing. Look for gradual banks, shallow water that is free of obstructions, and straight and wide sections with similar conditions downstream.
- If crossing a snow-fed river or stream, plan the crossing for early morning, when the water flow is typically lower.
- Be willing to turn back if conditions appear unsafe. Danger signs may include (1) fast water, (2) difficulty determining depth, (3) very cold temperatures, and (4) water that is deeper than knee-high.
- Wear boots, sneakers, or water sandals for foot protection and ankle support.
- If possible, use a hiking staff or stick for stability and three points of contact.
- Cross facing upstream, leaning slightly into the current and keeping two points of contact with the river bottom at all times.
- Remove wet shoes and socks immediately after crossing and replace them with dry ones to prevent blisters.

Handcart Safety and Care

Leaders should be aware of the hazards associated with handcarts and ensure that all handcarts are well constructed and able to carry trek supplies safely.

The following guidelines can help participants avoid injuring themselves and others:

- Do not ride in the handcart, except in an emergency.
- Do not run with the handcart. Trek participants can easily trip and get run over by the wheels.
- Stay away from the wheels. Clothing, especially dresses, can get caught in them.
- When going up or down steep hills, have only one handcart go at a time.
- When going down steep hills, attach a rope to the back of the handcart and have people hold it to help slow down the cart. You could also turn the handcart around and take it down the hill backward. Always keep it under control.
- When a handcart stops, pull it to the side of the trail to allow others to pass. When stopping on a hill, place rocks or other objects behind or in front of the wheels so the handcart does not roll.

Handcarts should be treated with care, as follows:

- Do not pull handcarts behind vehicles; they should be pushed or pulled by hand only.
- When stopping a handcart, gently lower the shaft to the ground. Never drop the shaft. Do not sit or stand on the shaft.
- Do not overload a handcart.
- Do not pull a loaded handcart sideways on a steep incline, with one wheel consistently lower than the other. If most of the weight is on one wheel, it can break or the handcart can overturn. For these same reasons, do not park a loaded handcart with one wheel considerably lower than the other.
- Avoid going over large rocks or into holes.
- Do not deface the surface of a handcart, such as by writing, carving, or painting.
- Watch for potential wear and breakdown of the handcart.

Sunscreen and Insect Repellent

All participants should have access to sunscreen and insect repellent. Participants should apply sunscreen to all exposed parts of the body before exposure to the sun—and then reapply it throughout the day. They should apply insect repellent to skin, clothing, shoes, and hats as needed.

Water

Ma's and Pa's and other leaders should ensure that everyone is drinking enough water to stay well hydrated. Every handcart should have 10 gallons of water. While pulling handcarts, trek groups should stop briefly every 20 to 30 minutes to drink water. Participants should also have adequate water in camping areas. Carbonated and highly sweetened drinks should be avoided.

Participants should drink water that is provided at the camp or from a portable source of clean water. They should be advised not to drink rainwater, stream water, lake water, pond water, or water from puddles or creeks. Even if such water looks clean, it may carry bacteria and parasites. Drinking impure water can cause serious sickness.

Diet

Because trek activities are physically demanding, participants should be given nutritious, well-balanced meals and snacks to help them maintain strength and energy. Nutrition bars, trail mix, or salty snacks can be provided between meals to help replace electrolytes that are lost during strenuous exercise.

Food should be stored, prepared, and served at the appropriate temperatures to prevent food-borne illness. For guidelines, see the Food Safety Fact Sheet on safety.lds.org.

Chickens, turkeys, or other live animals should not be killed during treks.

Fasting should not be incorporated as part of treks.



Communication

If possible, medical personnel should have two-way radios, cell phones, and a GPS unit to keep in contact with the medical vehicle and trek leaders.

Parents and leaders at home should have a way to contact the leaders on trek if there is an emergency.

Transportation for Medical Needs

Some members of the medical team walk with participants, while other team members follow in a vehicle that is out of sight. If someone is injured or cannot continue, team members on the trail contact those in the vehicle to pick up the person.

Members of the medical team, as well as stake or ward leaders, should know the route to the nearest hospital. They should also have the telephone numbers for local law enforcement and emergency response services. Only authorized medical personnel should call for emergency medical services, as requested by stake or ward leaders.

Lost Participants

Each Ma and Pa should keep track of the youth in their group at all times. If a youth or adult is missing, leaders should conduct a sweep of the area. If the person is not found quickly, the presiding priesthood leader contacts local emergency services immediately.

Fire Safety

Trek groups should know and follow local fire regulations. If fires are permitted, they should be kept small, and water and a shovel should be kept nearby. A fire should never be left unattended, as it may spread with a sudden breeze. Leaders should be ready to take quick action if necessary to prevent a fire from spreading.

When a fire is put out, the last spark or ember must be fully extinguished. Logs and sticks should be drenched with water on all sides, and ashes should be stirred until they are wet and cool. A person should feel the sticks and coals—including those that are deep down—to make sure they are cold.

Wildfire

Leaders should consider the possibility of a wildfire occurring and have an evacuation plan in place. The plan should take into account accessibility to vehicles, places of refuge, wind conditions, roads, terrain, and natural firebreaks. The plan should also account for the possibility that immediate transportation of the entire group may not be feasible. If a wildfire occurs, it is important to act quickly.

Medical Information and Release Forms

The medical staff should receive a signed medical release form for every participant, including leaders and support staff. The form should disclose allergies, current medications, medical conditions, date of last tetanus booster, and any special needs. The form or an attachment should also make clear the strenuous nature of the activity. For each minor, the medical release must be signed by a parent or legal guardian, giving consent for participation and medical treatment. A sample form is available online at treks.lds.org. Although this form specifies that it is for parental or guardian consent, it may also be used for adult participants. They fill it out and sign it as the participant.

Ma's and Pa's should be notified of the medical issues they may face within their trek group, but the information on medical forms should be kept as confidential as possible. Participants should be made aware of who will have access to their medical history.

Some youth have prescription medication. Taking this medication as directed by a doctor is the responsibility of the youth and their parents or guardians. After obtaining the necessary information, a leader can accept responsibility for making sure that a youth takes his or her medication. However, the Church does not mandate or necessarily encourage leaders to do this.

First Aid Kits

Sufficient first aid supplies should be available to treat dehydration, heatstroke, sunburn, blisters, exhaustion, insect stings and bites, snakebites, severe allergies, and other problems. Supplies for intravenous rehydration should also be available but may be administered only by qualified individuals.

Sample Basic Kit

Each handcart family should carry a basic first aid kit. The following items are suggested:

- Antiseptic wipes
- Moleskin
- Bandages
- Antibiotic ointment
- Hand wipes
- Scissors
- Baby powder
- Feminine products
- Sunscreen
- Tweezers

Sample Major Kit

Medical personnel should have their own extensive first aid kit, which could include extra supplies of the items in a basic kit, along with the following items:

- Disinfectant
- Epinephrine kit
- Pain relievers
- Diphenhydramine (Benadryl®)
- Hydrocortisone cream
- Butterfly bandages
- Ace bandages
- Sterile gauze pads (3 inches square and 4 inches square)
- Tape

- Knee brace
- Wrist splint
- Triangle bandages
- Burn ointment
- Thermometer
- Penlight
- Blood pressure cuff
- Intravenous (IV) system
- Ice pack
- Eyewash
- Nitrile gloves
- Aloe gel
- Pepto-Bismol® or similar medication for mild upset stomach, nausea, and diarrhea
- Safety pins
- Soaking basins
- Other supplies or medications, at the discretion of the medical personnel

Individuals who may require epinephrine for allergies should carry an epinephrine autoinjector (such as an EpiPen®) with them at all times. The medical staff should have backups of appropriate dosage for those who may require treatment.

Emergency Action Plan

Leaders should prepare a written emergency action plan in case of injuries, accidents, lost youth, and severe weather. This action plan should be in place before any emergency may occur. It should include a detailed health and safety plan to help prevent emergencies.

Leaders should have a reliable and tested emergency communication system, typically using two-way radios or cell phones. One or more emergency vehicles—with air conditioning, if possible—should be close enough to reach participants in case of an emergency but should be out of sight.

Symptoms of and Treatments for Common Injuries and Illnesses

This section provides an overview of some injuries and illnesses that may occur during treks, along with basic first aid treatments. For additional first aid information, leaders may want to refer to *Wilderness and Remote First Aid*, a guide from the Red Cross that is available at redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m4240197_WildernessRemoteFirstAid_PocketGuide.pdf.

If a trek participant is injured:

- Trekking should stop.
- The trail boss should be made aware of the injury, and he or she contacts the medical staff.
- Leaders temporarily treat the injured person until the medical staff arrives.
- Medical personnel evaluate the condition of the injured person and give treatment.
- Medical personnel update the trail boss and other leaders on the person's condition.
- If the situation requires evacuation, medical personnel make the arrangements and inform the person's parents, bishop, and appropriate stake leaders.

For additional instructions about responding to an accident or injury, see *Handbook 2*, 13.6.20.

Dehydration and Heat Exhaustion

Dehydration can lead to heat exhaustion, heatstroke, and death. To prevent dehydration and heat exhaustion, participants should drink plenty of water, even when they are not pulling handcarts. They should drink to prevent thirst, not to quench it. In hot conditions, groups may need to refill their water containers two or



At the Desert Land and Livestock site, a trek family works together to get a handcart up a difficult part of the trail.

three times during the day. Additionally, spray bottles are a good way to help participants cool off.

Symptoms of dehydration and heat exhaustion include:

- Moist, pale, and normal-to-cool skin.
- Muscular cramps, usually in the legs and abdomen.
- Weakness or exhaustion, sometimes with dizziness or periods of faintness.
- Rapid, shallow breathing.
- Headache and dizziness.
- Weak pulse.
- Heavy perspiration.
- Possible brief loss of consciousness.

To treat dehydration or heat exhaustion:

- Place the person on his or her back and raise the feet.
- Provide shade.

- Loosen or remove some of the person's clothing; remove shoes and socks.
- Give the person sips of water.
- Fan the person and place cool, wet cloths on the back of the neck, face, armpits, and lower legs.

The medical staff needs to be capable of treating moderate to severe dehydration, which may include giving intravenous rehydration. Without adequate medical care and supervision, heat exhaustion can quickly progress to heatstroke.

Prevention is the best remedy for dehydration. Leaders should emphasize adequate fluid intake throughout the trek. Even if participants do not feel thirsty, they should be encouraged to drink often. Some use of sports drinks may help in replacing electrolytes, such as sodium and potassium, that are lost through perspiration.

For more information about heat-related risks and prevention measures, see the Heat Illness Prevention Fact Sheet on safety.lids.org.

Heatstroke

Heatstroke is a serious condition that can lead to death if not treated quickly. Symptoms of heatstroke include:

- Hot and dry, or hot and moist skin.
- Dilated pupils.
- Rapid, shallow breathing.
- Full and rapid pulse.
- Generalized weakness.
- Little or no perspiration.
- Possible seizures (no muscle cramps).
- Loss of consciousness or altered mental status.

To treat heatstroke:

- Place the person on his or her back with the head and shoulders raised.
- Get the person to the nearest cool vehicle or other shelter as quickly as possible.
- Undress the person to his or her underclothing.
- Cover the person—especially the head—with cool, dripping wet towels, shirts, or cloths.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a serious condition that can lead to death if not treated quickly. It can occur when a person is not warm enough in the cold. Wind, rain, exhaustion, and wet clothing increase the risk. The temperature does not have to be freezing.

Symptoms of hypothermia include:

- Feeling chilly, tired, and irritable.
- Violent shivering.
- Inability to think clearly; stumbling and falling.

To treat hypothermia:

- Remove wet clothing.
- Cover the person with warm, dry clothing and blankets or a sleeping bag.
- Get the person to the nearest warm vehicle or other shelter as quickly as possible.

Sprains and Strains

Because handcart treks can involve long periods of walking over uneven terrain, sprains and strains are common. To treat a sprain or strain:

- Apply cold to reduce the swelling and pain.
- Elevate the injured part of the body and wrap it with a bandage to compress it.
- After 72 hours, apply heat to increase metabolism.
- Rest the injury.

Blisters

Blisters are common on handcart treks, especially for participants who are not used to walking long distances.

To help prevent blisters:

- Decrease the friction on the skin by wearing a pair of thin synthetic inner socks under thicker hiking socks.
- Wear good hiking shoes that are broken in.
- Remove wet shoes and socks and replace them with dry ones as soon as possible.

If a participant feels a hot spot forming on his or her foot, a blister may be forming. Stop right away and treat it as follows:

- Wash it with soap and water.
- Cut a piece of moleskin in the shape of a doughnut and place the hole of the moleskin over where the blister is forming.

If the blister has not broken:

- Wash it with soap and water.
- Sterilize the point of a pin, needle, or knife.

- Prick the edge of the blister on one side and slowly press out the liquid, leaving the skin of the blister intact.
- Cut a piece of moleskin in the shape of a doughnut, place the hole of the moleskin over the blister, and fill the hole with antibiotic ointment.
- Place a sterile bandage over the moleskin to keep it in place and to keep the wound clean.

Bleeding

To treat severe bleeding:

- Elevate the injured body part above the body level, if possible.
- Apply direct pressure to stop the flow of blood.
- Cover the injury with a pad or cloth. If the pad or cloth becomes soaked, do not remove it. Put another pad on top of the first one and get medical help.

Insect Stings and Bites

To treat a bee sting, scrape away the stinger. Watch for an allergic reaction and get immediate help if breathing difficulties occur.

Some ticks carry harmful organisms that can lead to serious fever and disease. To protect from tick bites:

- Walk in the center of trails, avoiding contact with foliage and brush.
- Avoid wooded and bushy areas with high grass or foliage.
- Wear clothing that covers the arms and legs to help keep ticks away from the skin.
- Pull socks over the bottom of pant legs to protect against ticks that are in low vegetation.
- Wear light-colored clothing to make it easier to see ticks that have been picked up.
- Inspect your clothing and your body at least daily, especially the hairy parts of your body.
- Use insect repellents that contain at least 20 percent DEET.

To remove a tick and treat a tick bite:

- Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible. Do not grab or squeeze the main body of the tick; grab only the mouthparts.
- Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Do not twist or jerk the tick, since that can cause its mouthparts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouthparts with tweezers. If you are unable to remove the mouthparts easily, leave them alone and let the skin heal.
- After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub, or soap and water. Use calamine lotion to ease itching.
- Save the removed tick in a clean jar, vial, plastic bag, or other sealed container with a moist cotton swab. Having the tick will help a physician diagnose and treat an illness if one occurs.
- Watch the bite location closely for any new rashes, and monitor your health for any flu-like symptoms or sudden or relapsing illnesses. See a physician immediately if symptoms appear.

For more information, see the Tick Bites Fact Sheet on safety.lds.org.

Standards

Each participant must act in accordance with Church standards and help other participants do the same (see *Handbook 2*, 13.2.4 and *For the Strength of Youth* [booklet, 2011]).

Sleeping Arrangements

“On overnight activities, leaders arrange sleeping accommodations so that male and female participants

do not sleep in immediate proximity to each other. Male and female leaders must have separate sleeping facilities. Married couples may share the same quarters if appropriate facilities are available.

“When staying in tents, youth may not stay in the same tent as an adult unless (1) the adult is his or her parent or guardian or (2) there are at least two adults in the tent who are the same gender as the youth” (*Handbook 2*, 13.6.12).

Sanitary Facilities

For groups larger than 15 people, portable toilets should be provided and maintained in a sanitary condition. For smaller groups, human waste may be buried in biodegradable bags or containers or in accordance with local regulations or best practices.

If sanitary facilities are not available for an extended length of the trail, and if vehicles are prohibited from pulling portable toilets over that part of the trail, it may be helpful to have the last handcart carry a five-gallon bucket with a toilet seat, as well as a pop-up shelter for privacy.

Camps should be set up at least 100 feet from any stream or open water. Wastewater should be disposed of at least 200 feet from water sources.

Campground Rules

Trek groups should know and follow campground rules. They should camp only in their designated area and always keep the campsite clean and orderly.

No-Trace Camping and Trekking

No-trace camping and trekking means leaving minimal impact on the environment. Some guidelines include:

- Minimize the impact on vegetation, such as plants, trees, and even weeds. Stay on the trail and in other designated areas.
- Minimize the impact on land.
- Minimize the impact on wildlife and ecosystems.
- Minimize the impact of campfires by using alternatives to fires or by using low-impact fires, where fires are permitted.
- Dispose of waste properly and avoid littering of any kind. Trek groups must provide a method for carrying their trash during the trek and carrying it out when they leave. At each campsite and along the trail, groups should make a final sweep before leaving the area and remove all food, signs, papers, and other litter. Trek groups should leave camping areas cleaner than they found them.

Appendix 1: Clothing Patterns

Two-Seam Gathered Skirt

Create a simple two-seam gathered skirt by using the following instructions.

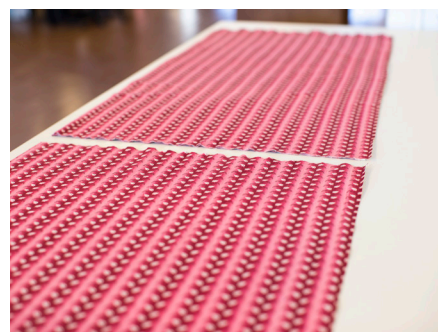
- 1 Measure the person from her natural waistline to her midcalf. Add 4 inches to that measurement for the waistline casing and hem.

You will need:

- Fabric twice the length of the above measurement. Good fabric choices include 45-inch-wide cotton, cotton-poly blend, muslin, or gingham.
- A length of 1-inch-wide elastic to fit snugly around the waist. Add 1 inch for overlap.
- Thread to match the fabric.



- 2 Cut the fabric in half crosswise.



- 3 With the right sides facing each other, sew the selvage edges together, forming a tube.

Press the seams open.



- 4 To create the waistband, turn down the top edge $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, press, and stitch.



- 5 Turn down the top edge again $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches and sew close to the hemmed edge, leaving a 2-inch opening to insert the elastic.

Fasten a safety pin to one end of the elastic and thread the elastic through the waistband.



- 6 Overlap the elastic 1 inch and stitch it together. Stitch the opening in the waistband closed.



- 7 Turn up the bottom edge of the skirt $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, press, and stitch.

Turn up the bottom edge again, 2 inches, and stitch close to the hemmed edge to form the hemline. The hem can be topstitched, sewn by hand, or stitched with a blind hem if your machine has that option.



- 8 Finished skirt



Simple Apron with Ribbon Ties

Create a simple apron by using the following instructions.

1 **You will need:**

- 1 yard of 45-inch-wide cotton, cotton-poly blend, muslin, or gingham fabric.
- 2 to 3 yards (depending on the waist measurement) of 2- to 3-inch-wide grosgrain ribbon. (Satin ribbon can be substituted, but it is not quite as sturdy.)
- Thread to match the fabric.
- Straight pins.



2 To form the sides of the apron, turn the selvage edges to the wrong side $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, press, and stitch in place.

Turn up the bottom edge $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, press, and stitch close to the edge.



3 Turn up the bottom edge again, 2 to 3 inches, and sew close to the hemmed edge to create the hem.



- 4** To gather the top of the apron, sew two rows of basting stitches along the top edge, $\frac{1}{4}$ inch and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the edge.

With a straight pin, mark the center of the top edge of the apron.

Mark the center of the ribbon.

Measure out from both sides of the center mark of the ribbon, 9 inches for a small apron or 10 inches for a medium, and mark both sides.



- 5** With the wrong side of the apron facing the wrong side of the ribbon, match the centers, aligning the $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch basting stitch to the bottom edge of the ribbon.



- 6** Carefully pull the basting stitches to gather the apron evenly between the center and outside marks.

Stitch the apron to the ribbon, between rows of basting stitches.



- 7** Fold the ribbon over to encase the gathering stitches, matching the ribbon edges.

Stitch close to the ribbon edge, between the sides of the apron.

Topstitch the folded edge of the ribbon.

Finish the ends of the ribbon with a fabric sealant, or turn the raw ends twice and stitch.



Pioneer Shirt

Create a pioneer shirt out of a regular white dress shirt.

- 1 With just a few quick changes, a white dress shirt can appear more like a pioneer shirt. Secondhand stores are great places to purchase shirts.



- 2 The shirt you use needs to have a two-piece collar—a stand and a collar.



- 3 First, remove the collar from the stand by removing the stitches that hold the collar in place.



- 4 Next, remove the pocket by unpicking the stitches that hold it in place.



- 5 Finally, pin the open edges of the stand together and stitch them closed.



- 6 You now have a shirt that resembles a pioneer shirt.

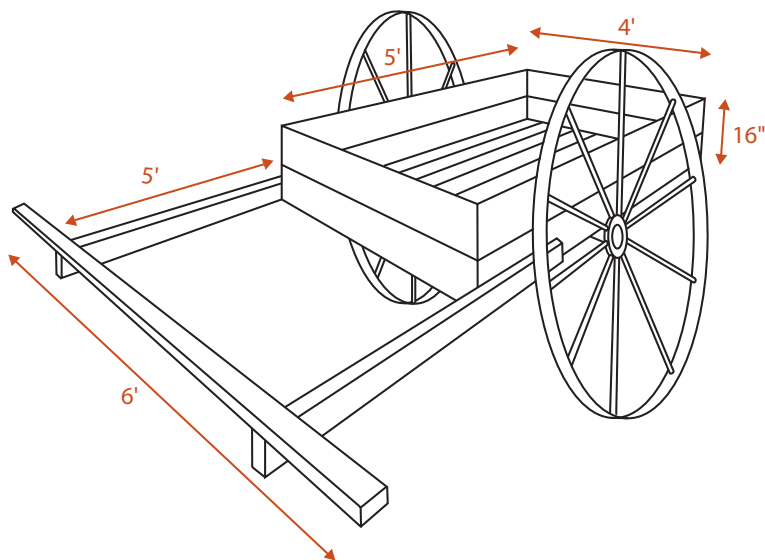


Appendix 2: Building Handcarts

Use these images and dimensions to build your own handcarts.

For treks at Church-owned agricultural properties that allow treks, handcarts are provided at the site. For treks at other locations, stakes or wards may rent handcarts or borrow them from other units. In some areas, youth and their leaders may need to build their own handcarts—or may choose to do so as part of their trek preparation.

With some basic building skills and the dimensions shown below, youth and their leaders can build handcarts. Usually, when constructing handcarts, leaders purchase the wheels from online vendors.



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