

February 20, 16

MEMORANDUM

TO: Palisades Bike Patrol Training Patrol Leaders

**FROM: Ingrid M. Sunzenauer
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SUBJECT: Training Patrol Leader Guidance

1. Organization of this Document

This document is organized into seven sections:

- Section 1: Guidance document outline;
- Section 2: Introductory information, including the mission statement for the Training Patrol process;
- Section 3: General information, requirements, and guidance;
- Section 4: Training Patrol Reports;
- Section 5: Training Patrol assignments and scheduling;
- Section 6: Conclusions and
- Section 7: Acknowledgments.

2. Introduction

a. The purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to outline the basic procedures for the Training Patrols conducted by the Palisades District Bike Patrol (PBP) Training Patrol Leaders (TPL), thus ensuring a consistent and effective training ride process.

However, it is not intended to restrict TPLs when conducting Training Patrols or to propose rigid processes. Each TPL has had unique experiences when patrolling in the C&O Canal National Historical Park, which he or she can share with the Potential Patroller being trained. These experiences are an invaluable resource to the training process.

Also, every Potential Patroller has varying strengths and weaknesses relative to his or her patrolling ability. Thus, the TPL uses his or her judgment regarding the best approach to address any weaknesses and thus may go beyond the basics covered in this document.

b. Training Patrols and the PBP Training Process

The Training Patrols are a critical component of the training process for Potential Patrollers. These training rides provide field experience as well as support for the principles, regulations and guidance offered during the PBP Orientation. The PBP would not be nearly as effective if it was not for the time and effort TPLs put into training potential volunteers through the training rides.

The Training Patrol process also ensures that Potential Patrollers are ready to fulfill their responsibilities as a Patroller and are prepared to ride independently and competently, without another volunteer or National Park Service (NPS) personnel to refer to if an unforeseen circumstance arises. This is critical to basic PBP operations. All Patrollers need to be trained to a level where they are comfortable riding independently. Equally important is that the Palisades District Volunteers in Park Ranger (VIP Ranger), PBP Volunteer Team Leader (PBP Team Leader) and PBP Deputy Team Leader are comfortable with the ability of new Patrollers to handle and address any situation that arises.

In general, the goal for completion of the training process is two months or less. This process begins with attendance at the Orientation session and concludes with the notification of the vest award. It should be noted that the timeframe is often far less than two months, but due to unforeseen circumstances, it can take as long as two months and occasionally longer.

However, in some cases a Potential Patroller may not have completed the entire training process within three months due to illness, travel, or lack of interest. When this occurs, the person may be required to begin the training process again or repeat portions of it since too much time has elapsed. Based on past experience Potential Patrollers often do not remember the basic information that has been covered after the three months. A decision regarding whether the Potential Patroller needs to start the process again or repeat portions of it will be made on a case by case basis by the PBP Volunteer Team Leader and Palisades District VIP Ranger with input from the Training Ride Leader, if a training ride has taken place.

c. Mission Statement

The Training Patrol Program Mission Statement is as follows:

- To support the Orientation Program for the PBP by reinforcing the principles addressed, including

- Always being alert and aware,
- Understanding where you are at all times,
- Using good judgment and putting safety first, and

- The importance of contacts.

- To ensure the PBP has the knowledge and ability needed to ride independently and competently without another VIP or NPS staff to refer to if an unforeseen circumstance or emergency arises.

- To reinforce the Mission of the PBP, including serving as ambassadors for the NPS, providing visitor services, and ensuring that all Patrollers understand,

- Their role as the “eyes and ears” for the NPS,
- The NPS rules and regulations,
- The importance of informing visitors about any violation that occurs, and
- The proper procedures for addressing violations and reporting them to the NPS.

3. General Information, Requirements, and Guidance on Conducting the Training Rides

a. Selection of TPLs

Potential TPLs should have demonstrated dedication to the Park and its visitors and should have at least 200 hours and one year of patrolling experience. In addition he or she should have demonstrated effective interpersonal and communication skills while volunteering in the Park as well as have shown leadership qualities.

New TPLs can be nominated either by the Bike Patrol Team Leader, Deputy, VIP Ranger, or an existing TPL. The Team Leader will forward the nominee’s name to the TPLs. If any TPL has an issue with the nominee, he or she will present that issue to the Bike Patrol Team Leader and the TPLs for discussion and resolution. All such discussions and the results will be held in confidence, and the information will not be communicated to anyone outside of the group.

b. First Aid and CPR/AED Certification Requirements

All TPL’s must have current, nationally recognized certification in both First Aid and CPR/AED to be able to conduct Training Patrols. The certification may be obtained through classes held in conjunction with the US National Park Service or outside sources, such as the American Red Cross. If the training is done through an outside source, the certification must be reviewed by the US National Park Service or their designated representative who is a certified instructor. This is to determine if the certification meets the requirements of the Park.

c. Number of Training Rides and Violations

In general, two Training Patrols are conducted. A key component of the rides is having the Potential Patroller observe the TPL address a violation and to have the Potential Patroller address one as well. If the Potential Patroller has addressed a violation, the TPL provides suggestions for improvement as well as positive reinforcement on what went well. As indicated previously, it is imperative that Potential Patrollers are comfortable in riding independently and in addressing situations that arise, including violations.

However, violations do not always occur on Training Patrols. Under this scenario, the TPL may use role playing to demonstrate addressing a fictitious violation as well as have the Potential Patroller respond to one. If this occurs during RA 2, the TPL has two options:

1. Even though a violation was not addressed directly, the TPL can use his or her judgment to say the Potential Patroller should be comfortable and effective in addressing violations and that this requirement has been fulfilled.
2. Alternatively, the TPL may note in his or her report that a violation did not occur and not make a judgment call. In this case a third Training Patrol would be scheduled.

It should be noted that a third Training Patrol may also be required on an “as needed” basis. Examples could include the inability to address a violation properly, having problems with location, etc.

d. Number of Riders

Generally, Training Patrols are conducted on an individual basis to ensure that all Patrollers can ride independently, responsibly, and competently.

e. Location and Length

It is up to the TPL to determine where the ride should begin and end. However, at least one ride must include a visit to the C&O Canal National Historical Park Visitor Center (VC) area, which affords a good opportunity for visitor contacts, the opportunity for a tour of the VIP Trailer, and for an introduction to personnel at the VC.

For example, Training Patrol 1 could be initiated in another Park location, such as Fletchers, which also affords a good potential for visitor contacts. In this case, Training Patrol 2 should include the trailer tour and a visit to the VC.

All rides should be at least two hours.

f. General Training Patrol Guidance

The following should be addressed when conducting a Training Patrol.

Before the ride:

1. Lay out, to the extent possible, what a TPL generally carries and discuss why and how the items are used. This includes tools, maps, towpath information, first aid supplies, etc.
2. Issue the Potential Patroller a PBP vest for the Training Patrol. If starting from the VC, take a vest from the VIP Trailer. For those TPLs conducting their Training Patrols in other areas of the Park, be sure and carry an extra vest.
3. Explain that the cell phone is generally the main communication tool that most Patrollers use, but that some prefer the radio. It is up to the Patroller to choose which one he/she would like to use.
4. Review the call in/out procedures including the Call #'s. Have the candidate call into the National Capital Communications Center (Central).
5. Go over recording of hours, which begin/end when entering/leaving the Park. If the ride begins outside of the PBP duty station, which is Mile 0 – 42.2, travel time may be counted as well.
6. Review electronic reporting. All Potential Patrollers should submit his or her own hours. The TPL will, however, record the number and types of contacts made in his or her electronic report. The TPL should inform the Potential Patroller not to record these contacts in order to avoid double counting.
7. Discuss the general principles outlined by the Mission Statement.
8. Discuss violations and how to address them.
9. Stress being the “eyes and ears” of the Park. This includes what to look for and what may be of interest to Park Headquarters, such as a tree blocking the towpath, severe erosion, damage to property, etc.
10. Suggest that Patrollers often address minor maintenance issues and hazards, such as debris on the towpath, hanging vines, small trees or limbs which have fallen on the towpath, etc.

While riding:

1. Discuss location, location, location! Review using mile posts and landmarks and encourage the Potential Patroller to get an odometer, GPS and/or cell phone

app to help keep track of location. As the Training Patrol progresses, stop and ask the Potential Patroller where he or she is.

2. Discuss the concept of “upstream” and “downstream”.
3. Discuss and demonstrate how to make contacts, emphasizing letting the visitor see the vest first. Also, let the candidate initiate a contact as well. Provide feedback, as necessary.
4. Address administering basic first aid and minor bike repairs. Remind Potential Patrollers that training in First Aid, AED/CPR and basic bike repair are required and are offered through the NPS.
5. Review common visitor questions.
6. Identify water sources, porta potty and toilet locations, campgrounds and the location of the Box in the Woods. Also include any other items of interest in the vicinity.
7. Ride through parking lots and campgrounds to show the vest.
8. Review how to address a violation and demonstrate when the opportunity arises. When the TPL feels the Potential Patroller is ready, let him or her address any additional violations that arise and provide any necessary feedback.
9. Use Role Playing and Situational Emergency Drills, which are an excellent tool for instructing Potential Patrollers how to observe and report emergencies to Central. All such emergency drills are simulated. Examples include park visitors on drugs, public drunkenness, medical emergencies, or automobiles and/or aircraft that have crashed into the canal, etc.

The drill starts when the TPL picks a scenario and announces it to the Potential Patroller. The Potential Patroller is required to make a simulated call to Central, which is played by the TPL. The TPL/Central receives a description of the situation from the recruit and asks additional information such as location on the towpath, description of person or vehicle, existence of fire, status of injuries/survivors, etc. The drill ends when the TPL/Central instructs the Potential Patroller to secure the accident scene and await arrival of police, ambulance, and/or fire department.

Include a First Aid scenario, such as a visitor suffering from heat stress and dehydration, has just been bitten by a copperhead, and/or suffered from minor cuts and abrasions. This is the First Aid information covered in the Orientation session, so they should be ready to address these scenarios.

As mentioned previously, role-playing can also be used to address fictitious violations if not encountered on the training ride.

When finished with the ride:

1. Review the highlights of the ride and any discussions that took place. Ask the Potential Patroller if he or she has any questions.
2. Provide the candidate an assessment of how he or she did. Let the Potential Patroller know that the PBP Team Leader will be following up with him or her.
3. Have the candidate return the PBP vest.
4. Ask the Patroller if he or she is still interested in the Patrol and would like to continue the training process.
5. Do not provide the combination to the VIP Trailer door or the Box in the Woods.

g. Specific Guidance for Conducting a Training Patrol from the VIP Trailer

When leaving from the VIP Trailer, address the guidance in the previous section as well as the following:

1. Review the available equipment, such as the Park cell phone, radios, tool bag, first aid kit and throw bag, and the sign out sheets. If any equipment is borrowed, have the candidate fill out the sign out sheets for each item.
2. Ask if he or she is interested in radio use and procedures. If so, provide instruction.
3. Discuss the importance of filling the three trail map boxes. Bring maps on the training ride and fill the map boxes. Also, discuss replenishing brochure holders with maps, which are generally located in boxes in the second room of the trailer. During peak visitor seasons, mention leaving an open box of maps where they are easily seen and are accessible as well.
4. Discuss keeping the VIP Trailer clean and orderly.
5. Point out the availability of drinks in the refrigerator and the honor system for paying. Also, discuss the water labeled for "emergency use".

6. Explain the purpose of the Travel Log.

Continue on to the VC.

7. Point out the rest rooms and concession stand and hours.
8. Go into the VC and introduce yourselves to the Volunteers and Rangers working there as well as any volunteers at the Bike Loaner Program (BLP) table. Encourage the Potential Patroller to volunteer at the BLP table during his or her training period to get more experience interacting with visitors and to meet other volunteers and NPS personnel.

When concluding the ride, have the candidate return the radio, if used, to the charger, and ensure the red light goes on. Also, sign in any equipment that was checked out, and close out the travel log.

h. Specific Guidance for Conducting Training Patrol 2

Areas of weakness identified in the Training Patrol Report from the first ride need to be addressed. In general, many of the topics just discussed are covered in both Training Patrol 1 and 2

Also, check the Report to review the visitor contacts and to see if violations were addressed. If not, it is critical to conduct the Training Patrol on a day when visitor numbers are expected to be high, giving the maximum opportunity for violations.

If Training Patrol 1 was not conducted at the VC, then Training Patrol 2 must be conducted at this location to provide the opportunity for the trailer tour and the visit to the VC. Thus, check the Training Patrol Report (see Section 4) to see where Training Patrol 1 took place. If Training Patrol 1 originated at the Trailer, topics related to the Trailer tour and VC visit are excluded.

i. Specific Guidance for Training Patrol 3

This Training Patrol should only focus on the area of weakness or concern as identified by the Training Patrol 2 report.

Also, if the focus is on violations, they TPL may consider conducting the ride in the area between Locks 5 and 10 ("Violation Alley"), which is known for its number of violations. The ideal time is between 2 or 3 o'clock and 6 pm, when people return from work and walk their dogs. This area can be traversed several times and will likely result in the opportunity for addressing a violation.

4. Training Patrol Report

After a Training Patrol has been conducted, the TPL are required to send an email with the information described below to the PBP Team Leader with a “cc” to the VIP Ranger that the ride has been completed. This and all email correspondence should be sent to the email addresses identified at the end of this Guidance.

a. Training Patrol 1 or 2 Report

1. Rate the ride as either “satisfactory”, in which case the potential patroller will be scheduled for the second ride, or “unsatisfactory”. If the latter, provide a short explanation.
2. Names of TPL and Potential Patroller, the Ride number (1 or 2), date and timeframe.
3. Location and direction of ride.
4. Visitor contacts: Number, description, and how many the Potential Patroller initiated and how they were handled. If there weren’t any, indicate that.
5. Violations: Number, how many were addressed by the Potential Patroller and how they were handled. For example, “Potential Patroller: 2 DOL reminders. In both incidents the owners put the dog on the leash. The Potential Patroller was comfortable in handling the violation.” If any controversies arise, those should be briefly described. If no violations were encountered, please note this.
6. Issues, weaknesses and concerns: Examples include being weak on location, not being able to call in/out, being too aggressive when handling violations, or others.
7. Strengths: Examples include patrolling in other Parks, worked as an EMT, interacted well with visitors, etc.
8. Role playing: Describe how the Potential Patroller did with any proposed scenarios.
9. Comments and observations: Anything of note that hasn’t been covered and should be considered.

b. Training Patrol 3 Report

Report items 1, 2, 3 and 9 as described in the previous section. If violations were the focus, then include item 5 as well.

5. Training Patrol Assignments and Scheduling

a. Assigning TPLs

TPLs will be assigned to a Potential Patroller in several ways.

1. Before an Orientation is scheduled, the PBP Team Leader will send a group email to let the TPLs know when an Orientation is scheduled and to check on TPL availability to conduct a ride immediate after the session. However, it should be noted that despite the confirmation email sent out just prior to the Orientation, no shows do occur.
2. The PBP Team Leader will contact individual TPLs to check on availability.
3. The PBP Team Leader may also send out a note to the TPL Team to check on availability some time after the Orientation. This option may be appropriate at certain times of the year and under certain circumstances. For example, if a Potential Patroller is nearing the two month timeframe due to scheduling difficulties or other factors, a request may be made to the group to help schedule the ride as soon as possible.

Occasionally the opportunity may present itself for a TPL to schedule a Training Patrol. If this occurs, the TPL should notify the PBP Team Leader as soon as reasonable that this has occurred. The report can be sent in later on.

b. Scheduling a Training Patrol After the Orientation Session

If possible, the first Training Patrol will be scheduled following an Orientation session, which generally takes place one Saturday per month from 10:00 to 1:30 from February or March through October. In years when the winter weather is milder, some Orientation sessions may be held during this time period, if Potential Patrollers have applied.

The Potential Patroller will be informed that he or she needs to be ready to ride right after a short lunch break. This includes wearing his or her biking clothes and having the bike and gear ready and parked outside of the VC. In addition, he or she must have turned in a signed Voluntary Services Agreement. A Training Patrol will not occur without a signed Agreement.

In some cases, the Orientation may end earlier. If the TPL is available, the ride can begin earlier as well.

It should be noted that a Saturday Training Patrol cannot always be arranged and is dependent on the time of year, availability of TPLs, etc.

c. Back to Back Rides

Training Patrols should not be conducted back to back on the same day. Potential Patrollers need time to absorb what they learned and to see if questions arise.

d. General Scheduling

Once a TPL has been assigned, unless an arrangement has been made to meet at an Orientation session, the PBP Team Leader will send an email to the Potential Patroller with a cc to the VIP Ranger, the Deputy Team Leader, and the TPL. The email will

- Identify the name of the TPL for either Training Patrol 1 or 2, and
- Will clearly state that it is the responsibility of the Potential Patroller to get in contact with the TPL.

However, the TPL also has the option of contacting the Potential Patroller.

If the TPL does not receive an email from the Potential Patroller within two weeks, the TPL should send an email, which includes the following:

- The willingness of the TPL to schedule the ride,
- Some proposed dates, and
- The caveat that if the circumstances of the Potential Patroller have changed and if he or she cannot do the Training Patrol in the near future or is no longer interested, the TPL should be notified.

After sending the email, if the TPL does not hear back in another two weeks, then the TPL should let the Team Leader know. Since about four weeks has now elapsed and the Potential Patroller has not responded, he or she will be put in the “dormant” file. No further contact will be made. If the Potential Patroller re-initiates contact at a later date, his or her file will become “active” again.

It is important to note that though the ride is scheduled based on the availability of the Potential Patroller and the TPL, any ride that is scheduled, is still at the convenience of the TPL. TPLs are not expected to change their schedules to accommodate a Potential Patroller.

e. Scheduling Difficulties

If scheduling difficulties arise and the problem is with the Potential Patroller, the TPL just schedules the ride when the Potential Patroller becomes available. In some cases this has taken a couple of months and is usually because of travel, illness, work duties, or other reasons.

If the TPL cannot schedule the ride because of the TPL's schedule and four weeks have passed, let the PBP Team Leader know and the Potential Patroller will be reassigned to someone else.

In some cases, other situations may arise which prohibit a Training Patrol such as bad weather or the Park being closed. In this case, the ride is conducted when it is once again possible.

6. Conclusions

The importance of the Training Patrol Process cannot be emphasized enough. Although a great deal of effort has been made to continually improve the PBP Orientation, actual field experience is critical. The training rides reinforce the messages from the Orientation and also show Potential Patrollers "how it is done!" They ensure that new Patrollers can ride independently, responsibly, and confidently.

7. Acknowledgments

The NPS as well as the PBP Team Leader and Deputy appreciate all of the efforts by the TPLs. It is the many hours and the number of rides conducted by the PBP TPLs that have resulted and will continue to result in a well-trained Patrol.

It should also be noted that this document builds upon and updates the purpose and content of the March 8, 2011 "Training Patrol Leader Instructions" document by TPL Tom Stanford and Ranger Rebecca Jameson, who should be acknowledged for their efforts.

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