



# HIWC Trip Captain

## Responsibilities, Hints and Tips

Thank you for volunteering as a trip captain for the HIWC. These guidelines have been prepared to help you make the trip you lead one of the best. The job of trip captain requires some work, imagination and time: because of this, the club feels there should be some benefits (besides satisfaction and fun!) for you. You are therefore entitled to receive:

Free bus transportation for the trip

Your start card at the Volksmarch (es)

Free lodging on overnight trip

The group prize won by the club at the Volksmarch (es) attended on the trip

### RESPONSIBILITIES

As the trip captain you are responsible for all phases of the trip you have volunteered to lead. You should advertise the trip as widely as possible to insure maximum participation. Obtain a *Werber (flyer)* for the walk and have the Registration Director pre-register the group for the walk. Advertise the trip in the club newsletter and at general membership meetings beginning at least two months before the scheduled trip. Remember to take the club flag and book if appropriate on the trip.

You will work closely with the Activities Chairperson(s) in developing, and closing out your trip. Outlined below is the policy to be followed in carrying out your job. The Trip Captain is also required to provide all participants an itinerary of the trip including departure and return times, and the location and approximate duration of all stops (except driver breaks). The Activities Director is responsible for selecting a bus company and confirming the bus details with the company. Make sure to get a copy of the trip confirmation and itinerary from the Activities Chairperson. Please become very familiar with trip cancellation policy.

### OPENING UP THE TRIP

The trip will be opened up for signups at general membership meetings. The Activities Chairperson(s) will prepare flyers for you to advertize the trip.

### REGISTRATION

Bus trips are primarily for the benefit of our club members; however guests (to include spouses of members) may participate in a trip provided space is available, but must pay the cost of membership dues above the standard trip fee. Remember though, space will not be reserved without payment of deposit or entire fee.

Once the trip has been opened for signups, you or your representative must attend all monthly membership meetings prior to the trip to take sign ups. If you cannot attend, you are responsible for getting a substitute and letting the activities chairperson know whom that will be.

If the trip has not been filled by the last meeting sign up date, the Activities Chairperson, after discussion with the Trip captain will determine the circumstances under which the trip will "go" or be cancelled.

A trip roster with names, phone numbers and email addresses of participants, and the trip report (with financial statement) must be turned into the Activities Chairperson within 10 days after completion of the trip. Financial report must include original receipts for all payments made with trip funds. Ensure that all paid trip participants are contacted, either by telephone or e-mail, within two days of the event to confirm their participation.

### **PAYMENT**

Payment must be in EURO. Cash, personal checks and electronic bank transfers will be accepted. Ask the Treasurer or Activities Chairperson for a receipt book before you accept payments. At time of payment a receipt will be issue showing complete names of participants, name and date of the trip, date of payment and signature of person receiving the payment. The original receipt goes to the customer. If people show an interest in the trip, but do not pay the deposit, do not list them on the original sign up roster. You may want to keep a separate listing of names/phone numbers of potential participants in case the trip does not fill up. Once all the spaces on the trip have been filled by people who have paid the applicable amount, you may still take sign ups – these names will go on a waiting list in order of sign up date, but no deposits will be taken. **NOTE: All payments collected for trips must be turned over to the Treasurer along with the receipt copy immediately for proper accountability and timely deposit of funds. The treasurer will, in turn, issue a receipt for the amount turned in by the trip captain.**

### **COSTS**

The trip cost includes transportation and Volksmarch start card. Other expenses may be included in the total price (dinner, admission fees, guided tours, etc.) and should be noted on the itinerary. On overnight trips, hotel costs are also included (often with breakfast). In some cases, if a participant has a single room preference, a supplement is charged to cover the hotel's single room surcharge. If a trip captain anticipates needing "on hand" cash funds during a trip, he or she must advise the Treasurer of this requirement no later than five (5) working days prior to trip departure.

### **CONDUCTING THE TRIP**

As trip captain you are the group leader and tour guide for the group. Council members on the trip are just along for the fun! They will not interfere with your operation of the trip unless you ask for assistance or it is obvious that their authority as a council member is

needed. They are always available for help and guidance, and should be consulted first when you need help solving a problem. Don't be afraid to ask for another opinion!

The following will provide a general guide for your trip. It is based on the experiences of former trip captains and covers many, but not all, of the problems and events you may encounter.

You should meet your bus about 15 minutes before your announced pick up time. Make sure you have the phone number of the bus company in case the bus does not show up. If the bus has not appeared by pick-up time plus 15 minutes, call. When you first get on the bus, introduce yourself to the driver and exchange first names. The rapport you establish with the driver is very important to the success of your trip. He/she can be very helpful in recommending rest stops, restaurants, and things to see, information on tours etc., because they have probably been several times to the place you will visit. Ask for their advice!

Check if the driver has beer, sodas, water, wine/sekt on the bus and that the toilet and A/C works. Conduct a walk thru of the bus with the driver to check the condition of the bus. Payment for drinks is made directly to the driver – ask him/her the price and where he keeps the change box. You will handle the sales. Check that there are trash bags available to be placed down the aisles. If the bus has a toilet, check to see if it needs to be opened with a key each time it is used; if so, keep the key handy. Check that sufficient paper towels and toilet paper are available.

When participants arrive, greet them and check their names off against your roster. Check that they have passports/leave forms/visas, if applicable for the trip. Ensure that all paid participants are on the bus at the scheduled departure time.

Once all are on board and you are underway, use the microphone to reintroduce yourself, introduce the driver by name, make any last minute announcements and explain the functioning of the seats, reading lights, etc. Note refreshment availability and price. Introduce council members, "first time" trip participants, special guests, etc. if you wish.

There are some general characteristics of tour buses that you should know about and announce to the group:

- The loudspeakers are generally louder in the back than the front. The people sitting under the speakers can actually be uncomfortable from the volume. Some buses have independently adjustable speakers, check with the driver if this is true on your bus.
- The front of the bus is generally warmer than the back. People up front may be uncomfortably warm just from keeping the rear of the bus from being too cold.
- When we contract a bus with a toilet, it is because we feel we need it, and having a working toilet is part of the agreement with the bus company. If it is not working this should be reported to the activities chairperson at the end of the trip. Encourage participants to use the bathrooms at rest stops rather than the bus as it can get stinky especially on long trips.

Be sure to announce when you plan to take the first rest stop. Ask the driver for this information. Before the group gets off the bus, announce the time they must be back on board. Help empty trash bins/bags, if needed. Before leaving the rest-stop make sure all participants are on board.

About 15 minutes before arriving at your destination, announce to your passengers so they can begin to wake up and prepare for unloading. Announce the bus departure time from the Volksmarch, location of the bus, license plate number. You should go into the Start hall and purchase the required Start Cards (get a receipt). Request that the group stays close together so you can find them easily to hand out the cards.

Enjoy the Volksmarch, and be sure to check if the group won a prize – is so and you like it, claim it for your own. If you don't like /want it you can have a raffle on the way home on the bus. About 10 minutes prior to departure round up any stragglers and head them for the bus. Be sure to do head count before you depart.

Now you are on your way to whatever special event or side trip you have planned. Provide the group with a short description of what is to happen. At the destination, again announce the bus departure time, location, and any other items/info the group will need to know. Before departing, again count heads!

If you are on an overnight trip, you should provide a brief description of your lodging accommodation and eating arrangements. You are responsible for making the room assignments (usually the rooms will have been prepaid by the tour company). Have a rooming allocation form ready to give to the hotel so they can record the number of rooms on it and keep a copy for your records. Determine prior to the trip who wants to rooms with whom, so time doesn't have to be wasted at the hotel trying to work this out. The hotel will need to be notified before your arrival of the number of singles and doubles needed. Check beforehand that the beds are two to a room and not one double bed if non-couples are sharing. In some countries, people will have to leave their passports at the desk for a few hours while the numbers are recorded to put on a report to the police. If the hotel requires this to be done, they are doing it because they are required by law of their country to do so. It is a standard procedure and must be accepted by the participants.

On most of the trips, the bus driver's room is free or paid for by the club. Verify that the number of rooms reserved includes one for the driver. Generally, the bus driver is responsible for his own expenses. Insure that all participants have their room assignments, keys, and are settled in. Announce before the group splits up the time of the next group meeting and its location. Make sure everyone knows your room number.

As trip captain, it is your responsibility to help people enjoy the trip as much as possible. You are the one to whom they are to turn if there are problems or questions. At the same time, there are many factors impacting on the trip over which you have no control. Remember to keep a good sense of perspective and humor, if you have fun, so will the participants.

An important thing to remember is to be organized, and keep the group informed of the schedule, with periodic reminders about the next meeting/departure time. Also let them know where they can and cannot be flexible and the impact of any delays.

Prior to the time of check out, stop at the desk and speak with the manager. Make sure that any additional charges (i.e. phone charges, room service etc.) incurred have been taken care of. Make sure everyone has checked their rooms and left nothing behind. Express your appreciation to the staff, be sure to get a brochure from the hotel for your trip report and for future trips.

About 15 minutes before arriving in PHV, prepare the group for their arrival home. In your final announcements you should remind everyone to check above, below and in their seats for personal items. Thank the participants for partaking in the trip and express the hope that they will continue to support HIWC activities. Ask them to please take their trash off the bus and mention any upcoming trips and the date of the next membership meeting; provide any non-members on how they can join the club. The bus will drop you off at the Park & Ride in PHV. Check the bus for forgotten items and check with the bus driver that everything is in order. Thank the bus driver for his/her assistance and services and give him his tip in an envelope. This completes your trip, but not your responsibilities! You will be filling out a trip report for submission to the Activities Chairperson and the Treasurer.

The Financial Report and any money / receipts should be turned in within five days to the Treasurer and a copy sent to the Activities Chairperson(s).

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Some points to remember:

- You are in charge of the trip. As such you are the official representative of the HIWC and the Council.
- You are authorized to pay for Start Cards, entrance and parking fees, whatever costs have been pre-determined as applicable by the Activities Chairperson and the Treasurer. In addition you are authorized to pay for bona fide emergencies, telephone calls during the trip to confirm planned activities. These expenditures will be made out of funds provided you by the Treasurer. Use common sense and you will be fine.
- Conduct of passengers on the trip is your responsibility. Any participant who does not follow your directions, or otherwise conducts him/herself in such a way as to bring discredit on the club or disrupts the trip, should be reported to the Activities Chairperson.
- Approved costs you incur in arranging the trip are reimbursable by the Club. See the Treasurer for procedures. Keep all receipts issued for turn-in with your Financial Report.

Attached are some of the forms you will need.