

1. Purpose

These Regional Hiking Guidelines govern all Scout hikes in the Western Cape involving youth and adult members. They must be read together with, and as a regional supplement to, the latest [Safe Scouting Policy: Practice Note: Hiking](#) (clause 1.1.5) and the [Safe Scouting Policy](#). Where any inconsistency arises, the more stringent safety or governance requirement applies.

Adult leaders must ensure that all hikes adhere to these guidelines both in the interests of safety and in ensuring that the hike has the sanction of Scouts South Africa for legal and liability purposes.

2. Definitions

Recce / Reconnaissance

A pre-hike, often undertaken weeks in advance, to confirm route suitability, terrain, access, hazards, water availability, conditions and planning assumptions, thereby ensuring safety and preparedness.

Adult hike leaders fall within the following leadership grades

- *Responsible adult* (every warranted adult Scout leader is assumed to be at least this grade).
- *Experienced adult* (a regular hiker, who has done comparable hikes in the last 24 months, with experience leading youth in outdoor settings).
- *Very experienced adult* (substantial recent experience of hiking in winter and summer weather conditions in the Western Cape mountains, and significant experience of hiking with Scouts).

Letter grading (Technical difficulty)

- *Grade A:* Hike – Established hiking trails. Generally hands are not needed, but ascent / descent may be steep. (e.g. Platteklip Gorge or Kasteelspoort).
- *Grade B:* Moderate Scrambling - Hands and arms frequently used. May be exposed but generally does not require a rope. A fall is likely to result in serious injury. (e.g. Lion's Head or India Venster).
- *Grade C:* Hard scrambling - Steep sections of difficult scrambling where the use of a rope is recommended. Un-roped falls could be fatal.

Number grading (Physical exertion)

- *Grade 1:* Flat walks, easy paths (suitable for all), short distances 5km or less.
- *Grade 2:* Strenuous half-day or moderate full day hikes. 5-12km, 100m-750m elevation gain.
- *Grade 3:* Full day hikes 12-20km and 750-1000m elevation gain.

3. Links

- [Safe Scouting Policy](#)
- [Safe Scouting Policy: Practice Note: Hiking](#)
- [Western Cape Emergency Procedure](#)
- [Hiring of and Instructions for using the SPOT Gen3 Satellite Tracking Device](#)

Note: SCOUTS South Africa Wiki has various pages with information on hiking, hiking safety, emergency procedures, etc. Wiki is edited by volunteers and might not be aligned with current policy. As such, it does not supersede the latest Safe Scouting Policy or these Guidelines.

4. Application for a SSA hike permit

- SSA hike permits are required for all hikes (including recce hikes) and applications must be made via the [online permit system](#).
- SSA hike permits must be approved by the applicable person as per Section 4, Table 1 of the *Safe Scouting Policy*.
- Applications must be made at least **7 days** before the start date of the hike and approved at least **3 days** before the hike commences.
- It is the responsibility of the hike leader to ensure that the hike permit is approved prior to commencement of the hike and that the 'Contact Person' on the hike permit is fully appraised of all details.
- A hike undertaken as part of a camp programme requires a hike permit in addition to the camping permit.

5. Regional Hike Advisors

The Region appoints Regional Hike Advisors to provide guidance on hike applications and, where required, to support the approval process. They also coordinate the Emergency Response Procedure in the event of an issue or incident. The Regional Hike Advisors and their contact details are listed on the [Western Cape Emergency Procedure](#) page.

If a Regional Hike Advisor has concerns about a hike application, they may impose conditions to be met before the application can be approved. Any requirements set by the Regional Hike Advisors take precedence over those of other applicable permit approvers and must be complied with.

In exceptional circumstances, it may not be possible to meet the minimum notice period for a permit application. For example, snowfall may create a short window in which a hike can be organised before conditions change. In such cases, the Regional Hike Advisors must be notified beforehand, and the application may then be considered on its merits.

6. Hike leaders and participants

Scout and adult hike leaders of any hike must, wherever reasonably possible, have previously completed the hike, in the same direction, as part of a hiking group so that they are thoroughly familiar with it.

An exception applies to the Springbok Expedition, for which the Springbok candidate must not have done the route before. The involvement of the *RTC: Scout Programme*, or their nominee, the Springbok coordinator and/or the Hike Advisors, is considered sufficient to ensure the relevant levels of planning and safety are considered before approval is granted.

The leader of every Scout hike must carry a physical **topographical map** or guide book, in addition to any GPS, mobile phone or digital device. Relying on digital devices alone is not permitted. Where digital devices are used, suitable battery or power backup arrangements must be carried.

The ratio of adult leaders to youth members on a hike must be at least in accordance with Section 6 of the *Safe Scouting Policy*. Scout-led hikes must comprise no fewer than four and no more than eight Scouts, being the normal maximum size of Scouts in a patrol.

Scout hike leaders must meet the minimum requirements set out in the *Safe Scouting Policy* and *Hiking Practice Note*, and the applicable advancement level requirements in **Appendix A: Unit and Advancement Level hiking requirements**.

In the Western Cape, the following additional minimum requirements apply to overnight hikes at First Class level and above:

- the Scout hike leader must hold the [Map Reading Scoutcraft badge](#).
- participants must have completed at least three Scout hikes before taking part in a First Class hike.

Springbok and First Class hikes must be led by the relevant Springbok or First Class applicant without an adult attending or trailing the group, unless this requirement is expressly waived by the *RTC: Scout Programme* in light of specific circumstances.

7. Approval considerations

Appendix B: Hike Routes lists various hike routes with associated considerations and restrictions (age, recce hikes, weather, season and leadership). The route list is not an exhaustive list of approved routes and other routes may be considered on their merits. The listed conditions do not constitute blanket pre-approval.

Route conditions are generally based on parties carrying overnight gear. Day hikes on the same route must meet the same conditions.

Age-related guidance is based on typical circumstances. The Troop Scouter, in consultation with the Regional Hike Advisors, must assess whether a Scout has the ability, experience and fitness required for a particular hike.

When considering whether to grant approval for a hike, the following factors are considered:

- the age, experience, fitness and overall capability of the hike leader and the hiking group.
- appropriate clothing and gear.
- familiarity with and proximity to the hike route.

Springbok Expedition applications are assessed by the assigned Springbok Expedition Examiners in accordance with the prescribed timelines for Springbok activities. The Springbok Expedition examiner should ensure that the Regional Hike Advisors are notified prior to a Springbok Expedition commencing and the plan shared.

8. Table Mountain

Scout-led hikes on Table Mountain with no adult leader present may only use the following seven routes:

Southern Suburb side (East)	Constantia Nek Jeep Track
	Nursery Ravine
	Skeleton Gorge
City side (North)	Platteklip Gorge
Atlantic side (West)	Kasteelspoort
	Woody Ravine
	Corridor Ravine

An experienced adult leader must be part of the hike party for any other route up or down Table Mountain.

When staying at the [Table Mountain Scout Hut](#), hike parties must comply with the following requirements:

- SANParks/Table Mountain National Park does not allow sleeping outside the hut, or elsewhere on the mountain
- fires may not be lit outside the hut and may be made only in the internal braai place
- gathering firewood on the mountain is strictly prohibited - all wood or charcoal must be brought up by the hike party.
- all rules relating to cleaning, waste disposal, breakages and reporting must be strictly followed

9. Hikes outside Western Cape region

Applications for hikes outside the Western Cape must be submitted to WC Regional Commissioner at least one month in advance to allow permission to be obtained from the Regional

Commissioner of the region in which the hike will take place. All such hikes are also subject to the requirements and guidelines of the host region.

Regional and National Hiking Trails: applications are considered on their merits. As a general guideline, Scouts must be at least 14 years or older, under experienced adult leadership.

Drakensberg: Scouts must be at least 14 years or older, under very experienced adult leadership.

Fish River Canyon (Namibia): This hike is only open from May to September. It is suitable for Scouts aged 14 and older, with very experienced adult leadership. Additional [International requirements](#) apply to travel outside South Africa.

10. Rock climbs

Hikes that include climbs requiring ropework above Grade B are suitable for Scouts aged 14 and older and must be led at a ratio of at least two experienced adult rock climbers for every eight members of the hike party.

11. Security concerns

The Regional Hike Advisors monitor security and criminal risk and, from time to time, determine that permits will not be approved for higher-risk areas while identified threats persist. Such restrictions are published via the various Scouting communication platforms.

If the security situation in an area changes before departure, any permit approval for that area must be withdrawn.

Adult leaders should consult current local security information sources in assessing levels of criminal activity. The [Table Mountain Watch group](#) on Facebook is one such example.

Where appropriate, Scouts and adult leaders may make use of a Western Cape Scouts SPOT Gen 3 satellite tracker. This device uses a satellite uplink and does not rely on cellular network coverage. Details for [Hiring of and Instructions for using the SPOT Gen3 Satellite Tracking Device](#) can be downloaded from the Western Cape website.

12. Land owner permission

Most mountain areas in the Western Cape are owned or managed by SANParks (including Table Mountain National Park), CapeNature, Municipalities, and private landowners. Permission must be obtained from the relevant owners when planning any hike or recce hike.

Mountain huts must not be used unless the permission of the owner or controlling authority has been obtained in advance.

Permission to enter, cross, or camp on private property must be obtained before the event. In addition, proper etiquette requires that hike parties must also:

- inform the landowner on arrival and before entering the property.
- close gates behind them and avoid damaging fences or other infrastructure.
- comply always with *Leave No Trace* and any applicable fire restrictions.
- avoid damaging vegetation or crops and not pick fruit without permission.
- avoid disturbing wildlife, livestock or farm animals.
- drive slowly (typically 5km/hour) when passing through orchards or vineyards to minimise dust.
- thank the owner when leaving their property, or afterwards.

All rules and instructions issued by landowners must be strictly adhered to, including any last-minute closure of an area for any reason.

13. CapeNature permits

For all CapeNature reserves, a CapeNature permit must be obtained before entering the reserve. This applies to both hikes and recce hikes.

It is recommended that applications for CapeNature permits should be applied for at least **21 days** before the event for CapeNature to ensure risk has been appropriately considered and the relevant safety protocols are in place.

Applications for CapeNature permits must preferably be coordinated with the guidance and assistance of the Regional Hike Advisors who maintain Scouting relationships with various frequently used CapeNature reserves.

- Limietberg and Groot Winterhoek: Kuba Miszewski
- Cederberg: David Knight

All CapeNature permit conditions must be strictly observed (e.g. the lighting of fires, camping locations, route and zone requirements, protection of vegetation, no dogs, etc.). This includes compliance with any last-minute closure of reserves.

Failure to observe permit conditions, or to uphold an appropriate standard of behaviour, may place future access for Scout groups at risk.

Contravening permit requirements by any Scout or member of the hike party is regarded in a serious light and will lead to disciplinary action.

CapeNature may require, as a condition of the permit, a copy of the hike reports to be provided to them afterwards which is done via the Regional Hike Advisors. Any report or information provided must exclude special personal information and comply with POPIA.

14. Emergency Procedure

The latest [Western Cape Emergency Procedure](#) must be followed for any incident, such as

- injury to any member of the hike party requiring assistance from outside the group.
- the evacuation of any person or hike party.
- an overdue hike party, defined for this purpose as a party more than two hours late with no communication or indication of its whereabouts.
- any security-related incident requiring assistance from outside the hike party.

The hike leader and the "Contact Person" on the hike permit must be fully acquainted with the Emergency Procedure and must have the Regional Hike Advisors' contact details immediately available.

Appendix A: Unit and Advancement Level hiking requirements

The current hiking requirements at various unit and advancement levels are summarized below.

Advancement	Hike Type and Distance requirement	Minimum requirements of hike leader	Hike report/Log requirement
<u>MEERKAT HIKING BADGE</u>	ScOUTcraft theme Go on a hike of approximately 3km .	At least one parent, legal guardian or authorized family member to attend.	n/a
CUB SILVER WOLF	<u>Outdoor Challenge</u> A nature ramble with your Pack.	n/a	n/a
CUB GOLD WOLF	<u>Outdoor Challenge</u> A day hike with your Pack	n/a	n/a
<u>CUB HIKING BADGE</u>	Hike a distance of at least 8km over country tracks or across country. This must be split over two or more hikes.	- Be 10 before starting this badge	n/a
SCOUT/PATROL	Any patrol day hike	- Traveller - <u>First Aid Scoutcraft</u>	n/a
<u>TRAVELLER EXPEDITION</u>	Participate in a one day or overnight expedition of at least 10km in distance. The expedition can take place on land, or water. Scouts can either walk or use any form of self-propelled transportation.	n/a	Oral report , within 1 week , to your Patrol Leader or Troop Scouter
<u>DISCOVERER EXPEDITION</u>	Plan and run a day expedition of at least 10km for your Patrol which fulfils at least one of the following criteria: ● Use a recognised hiking trail; ● Hike to another Scout hall; ● Hike to an unusual or interesting locality. ● Hike a planned route on a dam or waterway.	- Traveller - <u>First Aid Scoutcraft</u>	Written log , 5 pages long, including a strip map of a certain section of the hike, within 2 weeks
<u>FIRST CLASS EXPEDITION</u>	Plan and take your patrol on an expedition which is a hike / walk / non-motorised form of transport expedition of at least 20km (or equivalent). This expedition must be over two days and have an overnight component.	- Discoverer - <u>First Aid Scoutcraft</u> Western Cape only: - <u>Map Reading Scoutcraft</u> - All members must have done 3 Scout hikes min	Written log , 10 pages long, within 3 weeks

<u>SPRINGBOK EXPEDITION</u>	Plan and lead a three-day, two-night Springbok Expedition over a route you have not previously covered. ● Minimum distance: 30 km on foot (other modes of transport must be approved by the <i>RTC: Scout Programme</i>). ● Group: at least four Scouts, including yourself, with the others at First Class level or below. ● Plan your route on a 1:50 000 map (or equivalent) Springbok Checklist	- First Class - First Aid Interest Western Cape only: - Map Reading Scoutcraft - All members must have done 3 Scout hikes min	Written log, within 4 weeks The log must include: ● Detailed routes, directions, and landmarks ● Your planning and outcomes ● Reflections on what could have been improved ● Clear enough for someone else to repeat your route.
<u>HIKING SCOUTCRAFT BADGE</u>	Participate in either two day hikes or an overnight hike. The day hikes may be patrol hikes, or hikes with family, and the overnight hike may be under the control of an adult leader or a senior Scout.	n/a	Written/verbal report on each hike.
<u>HIKE LEADER INTEREST BADGE</u>	Complete four hikes of which at least two are overnight hikes of at least 25 kms each.	- Hiking Scoutcraft Badge - Discoverer - First Aid Scoutcraft - This badge is aimed at Scouts who are undertaking their First Class and above.	Written log of one overnight hike using at least two different methods of logging a hike. OR Visual presentation to your Troop of one overnight hike. This presentation must show the route, hiking party, points or features of interest, etc.

Appendix B: Hike Routes

The following conditions are applicable as from **June 2026**. Current local restrictions and updated information must always be obtained as part of hike planning.

The route list does not constitute an exhaustive list of approved routes and routes not included in the Appendix may be considered on their merits. The listed conditions do not constitute blanket pre-approval.

Other routes may be proposed to the Regional Hike Advisors for inclusion in this Appendix.

Cape Peninsula

Constantia Nek Road, Nursery Ravine, Skeleton Gorge, Platteklip Gorge, Kasteels Poort, Woody Ravine or Corridor Ravine.

- Suitable for any time of year, by Scouts 11 years and over, with the leadership of Patrol Leader or Scout 14 or over.
- Suitable (for day hikes only) for 10-year old Cubs with a responsible adult leader.

Lower Contour paths of Table Mountain

- Suitable for any time of year by Scouts 11 years and over, with the leadership of a Patrol Leader or Scout 13 or over.

Table Mountain by any other 'A' or 'B' route

- Suitable for any time of year, by 11 years and over, with a responsible adult leader.

Any 'A' route in the South Peninsula mountain chain

- Suitable for any time of year, by Scouts 11 years and over, with the leadership of Patrol Leader or Scout 14 or over.
- Suitable (for day hikes) only, for 10-years old Cubs with a responsible adult leader.

North of Bainskloof Pass and Hex River Pass

Steenbokberg and Bailey's Peak (MCSA Cape Town section property)

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with responsible adult leadership. Recce not required.
- In winter, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with experienced adult leadership. Recce recommended.

Porterville (Groot Winterhoek), Plateau, Sneeuwgat, from Tulbagh farms (Rooiland)

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with responsible adult leadership. Recce not required.
- In winter, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with experienced adult leadership. Recce recommended.

Twenty-four Rivers (Kloof) from Groot Winterhoek Farm to Dasbos

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with very experienced adult leadership. Recce recommended.
- In winter, not permitted.

Cederberg Wilderness Region (various hikes)

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with the leadership of a Scout 16 or over. Recce recommended.
- In winter, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with responsible adult leadership. Recce required.

Jan Du Toitskloof

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with responsible adult leadership. Recce recommended.
- In winter, not permitted

Witels From Mitchell's Pass, as far as Third Swim

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 13 and over with responsible adult leadership. Recce not required.
- In winter, not permitted.

Witels from Waaihoek

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 15 and over with experienced adult leader. Recce not required.
- In winter, not permitted.

Visgat from weir to 'S' Pools (Private property)

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with responsible adult leadership
- In winter, not permitted.

Visgat from 'S' Pools to Boskloof (Private property)

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 15 and over with responsible adult leadership.
- In winter, not permitted.

West Coast - Saldanha to Silverstream Strand

- In winter or summer, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with the leadership of a Scout 16 or over. Recce not required.

Bainskloof Pass to Du Toits Kloof Pass**Bainskloof Pass to Du Toitskloof Pass or reverse**

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 12 and over with responsible adult leadership, or 13 and over with leadership of a Scout 16 or over. Recce not required.
- In winter, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with very experienced adult leadership only. Recce recommended.

Bainskloof Hotel to Hugo's House and Junction Pool. Du Toitskloof Pass (highest point) to Suurvlakte

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 11 and over with leadership of a Scout 15 and over.
- In winter, suitable for Scouts 11 and over with responsible adult leadership. Recce recommended.

Bainskloof - The Kloof (Witrivier)

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 12 and over with the leadership of a Scout 16 or over. Recce not required.
- In winter, not permitted.

Bobbejaanskloof Path as far as the waterfalls

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 12 and over with the leadership of a Scout 16 and over.
- In winter, not permitted.

Klein or Groot Wellington Sneekop from Bobbejaanskloof, Tierkloof or Witrivier, Observation Peak, Kromrivier Peak, Kromrivier Hut, down the ridge to Nuweland

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with the leadership of a Scout 16 and over. Recce recommended.
- In winter, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with very experienced adult leadership. Recce required.

Slanghoek Pile, Needle or Peak. Grassy Dome, Witteberge

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with experienced adult leadership. Recce recommended.
- In winter, not permitted.

Kromrivier Dome, New Year Peak

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with leadership of a Scout 16 and over. Recce not required.

- In winter, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with experienced adult leadership. Recce required.

Route Du Toit's Kloof to Franschhoek Pass and Villiersdorp

Franschhoek Pass to the gate on the road from Worcester to Stettynskloof Dam, or via Agtertafelberg and the jeep track to Du Toits Kloof

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with the leadership of a Scout 16 and over. Recce recommended.
- In winter, not permitted

Du Toit's Kloof, up the jeep track to Agtertafelberg, and down Stettynskloof past the dam to the gate on the road to Worcester

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with the leadership of a Scout 16 or over.
- In winter, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with responsible adult leadership. Recce not required.

Donkerkloof, to Saddle. Also Du Toitskloof Pass to Agtertafelberg by Jeep track

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with responsible adult leadership due to security concerns.
- In winter, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with responsible adult leadership due to security concerns. Recce not required.

Hugenotskop from Miaspoort

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with responsible adult leadership. Recce not required.
- In winter, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with experienced adult leadership. Recce required.

Agtertafelberg to Du Toitskloof Pass, down Elandsrivier

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with responsible adult leadership. Recce required.
- In winter, not permitted.

Franschhoek Pass to Sir Lowry's Pass

Hottentots-Holland Section of the Boland Hiking Trail

- In summer, the main trail and also the Nuweberg - Jonkershoek alternative, are suitable for Scouts 14 and over with the leadership of a Scout 16 or over. Recce not required.
- In winter, these portions are suitable for Scouts 14 and over with responsible adult leadership. Recce not required.

High-level traverse between Landdrooskop Hut and Kurktrekkernek Landdrooskop

- In summer, the main trail and also the Nuweberg - Jonkershoek alternative, are suitable for Scouts 14 and over with the leadership of a Scout 16 or over. Recce required.
- In winter, this portion is suitable for Scouts 16 or over with very experienced adult leadership. Recce required.
- Day hikes in all portions are subject to the same conditions.

Banghoekrivier (day hike)

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 12 and over with the leadership of a Scout 14 or over.
- In winter, not advised for Scout parties.

Kurktrekkernek to Robertsvlei, Coetzenburg or Vergenoeg or Jonkershoek to Stellenbosch or Haelkop (Guardian Peak). Helderberg to Jonkershoek

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with responsible adult leadership. Recce not required.
- In winter, suitable for Scouts 14 and over with experienced adult leadership. Recce required.

Jonkershoek, Day hikes from end of the circular vehicle road

- Car access limited to 20 vehicles per day.
- Tweede Waterval suitable for Scouts 11 and over with leadership of a Scout 14 or over. Recce required.
- Swartboskloof trail and Panorama circuit suitable for Scouts 14 and over with responsible adult leadership.
- In winter, not recommended

Gantouwpas (upper section) from Sir Lowry's Pass or Steenbras Station (day hike)

- In summer or winter, suitable for Scouts 11 and over or Cubs 10 and over. No leadership conditions. Recce not required.

Klipdrifrivier

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 12 and over with responsible adult leadership or 13 and over with leadership of a Scout 16 or over. Recce recommended.
- In winter, not advised for Scout parties.

Vergelegen farm to Nuweberg

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 12 and over with responsible adult leadership or 13 and over with leadership of a Scout 16 or over. Recce not required.
- In winter, not recommended.

Sir Lowry's Pass to South Coast

Steenbrasrivierskloof, from Benning Bridge (Steenbras river mouth) to Dam (day hike)

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 12 and over with leadership of a Scout 16 or over. Recce required.
- In winter, not advised for Scout parties.

Koelbaai to Steenbras (through catchment) - permit required from Cape Town City Council)

- In summer, suitable for Scouts 13 and over with leadership of a Scout 16 or over. Recce recommended.
- In winter, suitable for Scouts 13 and over with responsible adult leadership. Recce recommended.