

W&OD Trail Patrol Handbook



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1 Introduction

Welcome to the Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail Patrol! We are a volunteer organization, sponsored by the Friends of the W&OD (FOWOD) (www.wodfriends.org). This Handbook provides information that should be useful to you as a Patrol member. We think you will find the Patrol to be a fun and rewarding experience.

1.1 About the W&OD Trail

The W&OD is a Regional Park, owned and operated by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. It is a multi-use trail, supporting the needs of area pedestrians, runners, cyclists, skaters, equestrians, and others. The W&OD is 100 feet wide and nearly 45 miles long. The W&OD runs through much of Northern Virginia, from Shirlington at the eastern end to Purcellville in the west. In addition, there are 32 miles of adjacent gravel trail for horseback riding. There are numerous amenities on or nearby the entire length of the W&OD.

There are over two million recreational users of the W&OD each year. The W&OD is a major connector for area trails, with connections or close access to the C&O Canal trail, the Custis trail, the Mount Vernon trail, the Fairfax County Parkway trail, and others. It is popular as an alternative commuter route, especially for bicycle commuters. These trail users enjoy the physical and mental advantages of a healthy alternative to automobile commuting on our congested roads.

Contact information for the NVRPA and W&OD Trail can be found in Appendix A.

1.2 About the Friends of the W&OD

The Friends of the Washington and Old Dominion Trail (or Railroad Regional Park) – FOWOD for short – is a citizen-driven organization dedicated to protecting and improving the W&OD Trail. It was re-established as an advisory body of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority in 1997. The purpose of the FOWOD is to support and enhance the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park (W&OD) as a recreational, environmental and historic resource through volunteer efforts in fund raising, promotion, educational programming and maintenance.

The governing body of the FOWOD normally consists of 15 northern Virginia residents from a number of jurisdictions on or near the trail who have a variety of recreational interests in the W&OD trail. The current officers of the FOWOD Board are:

Contact information for FOWOD can be found in Appendix A.

1.3 About the W&OD Trail Patrol

The W&OD Trail Patrol was created in the spring of 2000, as a continuing project of the FOWOD. The Patrol is a volunteer, public-service organization, funded entirely by the FOWOD and public donations. During its initial year of operations, the Patrol performed

over 2500 miles and 250 hours of patrol activity. The Patrol has grown consistently since its start, and in 2006 performed over 12,800 miles and 1,250 hours of patrol activity.

We intend the W&OD Trail Patrol to be a user-managed and user-operated organization. All Patrol members are eligible to participate in the management of the Trail Patrol. In addition, Senior Patrol members assist in the orientation and other training activities.

Contact information for the W&OD Trail Patrol Trail can be found in Appendix A.

2 Goals of the W&OD Trail Patrol

The goals of the W&OD are the following:

Goal 1. Promote trail courtesy and safety.

Goal 2. Provide information to the public.

Goal 3. Come to the aid of trail users when possible.

The above goals are listed in order of “expected frequency.” In other words, we expect that most often – almost constantly, in fact – you will be pursuing the first goal of promoting trail courtesy and safety, quite often simply by the example you provide in your normal use of the W&OD. Next, there will be fairly frequent occasions on which you will assist trail users by providing information about the W&OD and surrounding areas and amenities. Finally, there will be (hopefully) rare occasions when you can come to the aid of a trail user who has a mechanical, medical, security, or other urgent problem. Each of these goals is explained and discussed below.

Before we go on, it is important to discuss what kind of organization we are NOT. The W&OD Trail Patrol is not an “enforcement” organization, and its members have no special authority or privileges. Nowhere in the goals listed above do you see any enforcement or regulatory functions. It is important for you to keep this in mind as you conduct your patrol activities.

2.1.1 Promote Trail Courtesy and Safety

Because it is such a common function, this is one of our most important goals. As you will no doubt discover, your very presence and visibility will to some extent promote trail courtesy and safety. It is important that all of your actions as a Patrol member reinforce the image of a safe and courteous trail user. Your presence and positive example will go a long way to helping us achieve this goal.

There are situations, however, that call for specific action. In your Patrol activities you will notice that users often violate general rules of courtesy or published rules of use for the W&OD. Although we are not an enforcement body, you can take action. Many times a tactful reminder will accomplish the most good. In cases of egregiously discourteous or unsafe actions, there are other courses open to you that still fall short of enforcement or authoritative action. This handbook and your growing experience as a Patrol member will help you to learn how to effectively deal with the specific situation at hand.

2.1.2 Provide Information to the Public

We would like you to become an information resource for trail users. One of the things you will be doing very often as a Patrol member is talking to other trail users. They will have questions about the W&OD, the surrounding area, and about the Patrol itself. Trail users will often not know where the nearest phone or restroom is, where they can get water or food, or the significance of a particular trail feature. Believe it or not, they will often not know what town or county they are in.

It is extremely rewarding to be able to answer these questions for trail users. They will be drawn to your Patrol logo looking for specific information or just general conversation. We would like you to become experts on the W&OD trail and the surrounding areas where you patrol. We would like you to develop an attitude of “anticipating” when a trail user needs information, so that you might approach those that are hesitant to ask. It is very gratifying to help trail users in this way, and this is probably one of the reasons you were drawn to the Patrol in the first place.

2.1.3 Come to the Aid of Trail Users When Possible

This goal is primarily concerned with urgent, emergency, or other extraordinary situations that might arise for users on the W&OD. As a Patrol member, you provide a set of “eyes and ears” in the interests of trail users. For most of the length of the W&OD (with notable exceptions), no other users are there specifically for the well being of the other users. This is a more serious part of your duties as a Patrol member, and it is an important responsibility.

Although these types of situation are rare, the consequences for the individual involved can be extreme. In case of accidents, injuries, or security incidents, your primary responsibilities are to contact the appropriate authorities to deal with the situation, and to try to improve the immediate situation with reasonable measures. Under no conditions are you expected or encouraged to attempt what is beyond your authority, training, or capabilities. We are not looking for you to be a hero or heroine, but to provide what reasonable aid that you can. This handbook will help you respond with appropriate actions in emergency situations.

3 Who Makes a Good Patrol Member?

The following attributes are ones that we have discovered to be important for Patrol members to be effective and for Patrol activities to be rewarding. Don't worry if you feel you are lacking in one of these areas – we all have room for improvement! And you will find that the Patrol is a great opportunity to grow in certain, unexpected ways. Likewise, we each have strong points, so be sure to use your strong attributes to their best utility as a Patrol member.

Good common sense and good judgment. Every situation on the W&OD cannot be foreseen, so Patrol members need to be able to make good decisions about what to do (and what not to do).

Outgoing – a “people person.” A good Patrol member is friendly and enjoys helping others.

Good communication skills. A Patrol member must be a good enough communicator to clearly get a message about trail safety across to someone without provoking a negative response. This is not as hard as it might sound, although sometimes it is impossible. ☺

Dependable and Self-Motivated. Patrol members must fulfill their obligations and responsibilities, usually without direct supervision.

Knowledgeable. Patrol members should have some basic knowledge about the W&OD and the ability to learn more. This includes its rules and regulations, its physical layout, and the ability to recognize unsafe conditions on the trail.

Safety Oriented. Patrol members think “Safety First” and act as a good example to other trail users.

Dedicated. Patrol members should have enough personal time to devote a minimum number of hours to scheduled patrolling.

Diligent. Patrol members must be willing to put in the time to complete the (minimal) record-keeping duties that go along with the position.

4 W&OD Trail Patrol Policies

This section outlines general policies we expect our Patrol members to abide by. You should keep these policies as considerations for any situation you encounter. In joining the Patrol, you are implicitly agreeing to abide by these policies.

4.1 W&OD Park Rules

Patrol members must abide by W&OD park rules at all times. The following rules are applicable:

- Travel in the right lane.
- Move left to pass.
- Give appropriate warning to the trail users ahead.
- Move off the trail when you come to a stop.
- Pedestrians have the right-of-way unless otherwise posted.
- Travel only at speeds that are safe and appropriate to trail conditions and usage.
- No bicycle or equestrian races or competitive speed training. Foot races by Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority permit only, and subject to the regulations established by the Park Authority.
- (By regulation) Pets must be on leash.
- (By regulation) Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- (By regulation) The park (and trail) closes at dark.

4.2 Treatment of Trail Users

Patrol members must treat all trail users with courtesy and respect. Abusive, belligerent, or confrontational behavior is not acceptable. Under no circumstances should Patrol members try to physically restrain or influence trail users.

4.3 First Aid Treatment for Trail Users

Patrol members must neither administer First Aid nor offer to administer First Aid if they are not trained to do so. Patrollers can offer to provide minor medical supplies in the case of minor injuries, but they should allow the injured party to apply those supplies themselves. Nothing should be offered to a trail user for ingestion (e.g., aspirin), with the exception of water from an unopened, commercially sealed bottle.

4.4 Patroller Safety Equipment

Patrol members should use the standard safety gear for their sport (e.g., a helmet for cyclists) while on patrol.

4.5 Training

Patrol members must attend an Orientation session before they are allowed to conduct Training patrols. Patrol members must successfully complete their Training period before they are allowed to conduct unsupervised patrols.

4.6 Use of Patrol Jerseys

Patrol jerseys, vests, or other clothing items provided by the Patrol for the purpose of identifying Patrol members conducting patrols should be worn only for events or activities that are directly related to the W&OD trail (i.e., while patrolling). Patrol members in general should not wear such clothing for events and activities not directly related to the trail. If in doubt with regard to a specific event, be sure to get permission from the Patrol leadership. There are sometimes “gray areas” in rides such as the Reston Century, which often uses some of the W&OD as part of its course. In these cases, we tend to be very lenient. However, Patrol members should take every care to dispel any appearance that they are participating in an event in some official capacity when in fact they are not.

5 Patrol Member Requirements

This section lists the minimum requirements for Patrol members. These requirements may change from year to year – only the current Handbook provides the definitive, current requirements.

5.1 Registration

Patrol members are required to register with the W&OD Trail Patrol management committee. Registration includes submitting accurate name, address, and contact information.

5.2 Orientation

Patrol members are required to attend the Orientation session provided by the W&OD Trail Patrol management committee. In some cases Orientation may be provided in a group (meeting) setting. At other times, Orientation may be provided individually (one-to-one) by a Senior Patrol member during conduct of normal training.

5.3 Training

Patrol members must perform supervised patrols before they conduct unsupervised patrols. There are typically 2-4 supervised patrols in the initial training for new Patrol members.

5.4 Patrol Member Code of Conduct

Patrol members are required to conduct their patrol activities in a manner conformant to the Patrol policies (Section 4) and, to the best of their ability, in a manner, attitude, and demeanor consistent with the best practices of the Patrol organization (Section 3).

5.5 Trail and Patrol Property or Equipment

Patrol members should carry the recommended equipment and supplies while on patrol. Patrol members are required to treat all W&OD Park property and Patrol equipment lent or given to them with due care. If they should decide to quit the Patrol, they will return all serviceable equipment that might be used by other Patrol members.

5.6 Patrol Notifications

In the case where an accident, injury, or other serious emergency occurs during a patrol, Patrol members are required to notify the appropriate authorities and the Park Manager at the first opportunity (i.e., by telephone).

5.7 Patrol Member Trail Knowledge

Patrol members should know their current location (in terms of both mile markers and nearest intersections) at all times while they are on patrol.

5.8 Patrol Reports

Patrol members should promptly file a report for each patrol that they perform. Reports should be submitted electronically.

5.9 Minimum Participation

Patrol members should perform a minimum of 4 hours of patrol time each month, or 2-4 patrols per month, during the period of high use (between May and September).

5.10 Patrol Times and Areas

Patrol members are free to choose the location and time of their patrols, with the only restriction being the normal hours of operation (i.e., daylight hours).

5.11 Patroller Identification

Patrol members should wear the standard identification (e.g., the T-shirt) at all times while they are on a patrol. The only exception is when inclement weather (e.g., rain or cold) precludes their ability to wear the standard identification. Patrollers should carry the standard identification card while on patrol, and shall issue such cards to trail users who challenge or question their role as a Patrol member.

5.12 Membership in Friends of the WOD organization

Patrol members should be members in good standing of the Friends of the W&OD. Patrol membership is determined solely at the discretion of the FOWOD, Trail Patrol management committee, and the Park Manager.

6 Patrol Concept of Operations

The section explains how Patrol operations are conducted. The handbook provides additional details on how to perform some of the following duties in later sections.

6.1 Getting Started

You generally get started as a Patrol member either by registering at the FOWOD web site (www.wodfriends.org – follow menu item “Trail Patrol”) or by letting one of the following individuals know that you are interested:

- Karl Mohle (wod@nvrpa.org)
- BJ Silvey (silveymarbj@comcast.net)

You will receive a response from the Trail Patrol organization about what to do next.

You must then attend an Orientation session and conduct training via supervised patrols that are scheduled by the W&OD Trail Patrol., where you will receive further instructions as a Patrol member and FOWOD-provided equipment (including this handbook). It is generally expected that Patrol members also are FOWOD members.

6.2 Training Patrols

After you have registered and have attended an Orientation session, you will enter a short training period where you can only participate in supervised patrols along with an existing, experienced Patrol member. Scheduling supervised patrols will be coordinated by Trail Patrol management, but is also partly your responsibility; you should be as flexible and proactive as possible in helping to schedule your training patrols, so that the training period does not extend indefinitely. Expect anywhere from 2-4 training patrols.

6.3 Receiving Equipment

After you have completed your training sessions, you will receive any equipment or clothing provided by the Friends of the W&OD and the Trail Patrol to support your patrol activity. The Senior Patrol Member who trains you will provide details about what you must do to receive your equipment. Your equipment will be mailed to you.

6.4 Unsupervised Patrols

After all the preceding activities, you are ready to conduct your own (i.e., unsupervised) patrols. The time, place, and mode of your patrol are entirely at your discretion, provided Park rules are followed. We encourage you to consider scheduling two-person patrols with other members that have similar schedule and mode of use as you; however, solo patrols are entirely appropriate and are encouraged.

During your patrol, you should carry all mandatory and recommended equipment and supplies. It is especially important that you wear your Patrol shirt (or jacket) whenever it is feasible. A significant benefit provided to trail users is our visibility and presence.

During your patrols, you will be conducting the following duties:

- Providing interpretive and geographical information to trail users.
- Watching for trail conditions that may be hazardous.
- Advising trail users of rules and regulations.
- Providing safety information.
- Helping with emergencies.
- Reporting unauthorized motor vehicle use of the trail.

You should remember at all times that you are an ambassador for the Patrol organization and the FOWOD and conduct yourself accordingly. You will discover that trail users greatly appreciate your presence and service, and they will quite often openly express their gratitude. This is the best part of being a Patrol member!

6.5 Patrol Reports

If, during your patrol, you encounter a serious accident, injury, or other emergency, you are to notify the appropriate authorities at the first opportunity. You must also notify the Park Manager after the authorities in such a case. Trail conditions or situations that are causing an imminent hazard to trail users must be brought to the attention of the Park Manager *immediately*.

If no serious incident occurs during your patrol, you are free to file your report (electronically) as soon as it is convenient. We prefer to receive reports the same day they occur, but there is some leeway as long as no serious incident has occurred or imminent hazard exists. We strongly prefer that you file individual reports for each patrol, but it is feasible to file several at one time (e.g., weekly).

Instructions and resources for filing reports are provided in a later section.

6.6 Patrol Management and Operations

The management committee will meet periodically to discuss, plan, and staff projects concerning the W&OD Trail Patrol. Patrol members will be kept informed of such meetings and are encouraged to attend. Patrol members are eligible (and encouraged) to participate in the management and operation of the Patrol by serving on the management committee, staffing projects, or just attending the meetings to provide input. The W&OD Trail Patrol is a young organization and is growing rapidly – there is a great opportunity for *you* to make a difference in what we become.

6.7 Advanced Training

The W&OD Trail Patrol is exploring opportunities to provide CPR and First Aid training opportunities to our members. We will also explore opportunities for sport or activity related training (e.g., bicycle mechanics and safety, in-line skating lessons, etc.) We are open for suggestions and opportunities, so don't hesitate to bring them to our attention.

7 Patrol Equipment

This section lists our “mandatory” and recommended equipment lists. Equipment is mandatory in the sense that it is important for you to have with you in order to carry out the main goals of the Patrol organization. All gear carried must be transported safely.

7.1 Mandatory Equipment

- Standard Patrol clothing (e.g., T-shirt)
- Standard Patrol identification card
- Personal identification (e.g., driver’s license)
- Cell phone (if possible)
- Emergency contact list, mileage chart, and W&OD rules (Contact list and rules provided in Appendix A).
- Safety gear (helmet mandatory for cyclists, skaters and horseback riders)

7.2 Recommended Equipment

- Simple First Aid kit (see below)
- Trail information brochures (e.g., Trail Guide, Playing It Safe, FOWOD Membership)
- Sport-related tools
- Extra water. (We recommend a small, commercially sealed bottle of water.)
- Whistle
- Money
- Wristwatch
- Other seasonal equipment (e.g., a blanket in winter)
- Pencil and Notepad
- Accident Report Form (we will need to produce this)

7.3 Example First Aid Kit

- Band-Aids (variety)
- Gauze pads (2- and 4-inch pads)
- Tape
- Antiseptic wipes
- Antibiotic ointment
- Sting ointment
- Tweezers
- Container for the whole kit

8 General Patrol Activities

This section discusses some common activities that you will experience as a Patrol member. We try to provide helpful hints, but remember that every situation is unique and requires thought and consideration. It is impossible to provide procedures that are good in all situations, at all times. By and large, the more experienced you become as a Patrol member the more effective you will become.

8.1 Dealing with the Public

In general, it takes experience to be effective in dealing with the public. It is impossible to set out a list of rules that will be correct for all people and situations. For the most part, the following are some good rules of thumb that are generally true:

- Be positive and friendly. This is by far the most important “rule.” You’d be surprised at how much more receptive people are to suggestions if you approach them in a friendly manner.
- Don’t be confrontational. You don’t have any real authority to force a trail user to comply with trail rules or even with common sense, for that matter. Strive to develop a collaborative style, and avoid confrontational tactics.
- Don’t argue. You are not there to argue with trail users, and some of them will argue with *any* suggestion you make. If you have to make a corrective comment, make your point and move on.

On the other hand, there are some things that you really do not have to tolerate from other trail users. The Park Manager *does* have the authority to ban a user from the trail for certain behavior, and he values what we are doing as Patrol members. Among the behaviors you do not have to tolerate are the following:

- Continued disregard for Park rules that is causing a hazard for other trail users, after being reminded of the rules.
- Any behavior that is threatening, belligerent, or extremely hostile.
- Any behavior that is illegal.

The important thing to remember is that *your* role in situations such as these is to “identify and report.” The action that you will be taking is indirect, but it is nevertheless effective.

8.2 Providing Information

There are four potential beneficiaries of the information you can provide. These are:

- Trail users
- W&OD Trail Staff
- The Patrol & FOWOD
- Local police

Trail users are primary beneficiaries of information the Patrol provides. Most often, you will provide information to trail users by talking to them, although you can carry some hardcopy resources (e.g., brochures) to hand out. In addition to tactful reminders about trail rules, users

also occasionally need to know how to find a phone, restroom, water, food, or other amenity. Sometimes users will want to talk about the W&OD or local history, trail features, and local sport clubs. Sometimes they will ask the time of day or want to talk about the weather.

We don't expect you to be experts about everything, but we encourage you to know as much as possible about the Trail and the geographical area in which you patrol. Just as you find it satisfying to help others when you can, it can be disappointing to be unable to answer a question for someone in need. Make it a part of you Patrol experience to gradually become increasingly knowledgeable in the subject areas that are important for trail users.

The general rule when providing information to the public is to do the best you can, and admit it when you don't know the answer. When you give directions or other information, take your time and try to be as clear as possible. Remember that some trail users may be unfamiliar with our area, and possibly unfamiliar with our language.

The Patrol will try to support you with information resources. We are compiling a "trail features" database that will be able to list the important amenities by Trail mile marker. The current handbook you are reading is just a start – we are looking for ideas (and information!) that we might provide as a resource to our Patrol members. And when you are asked to provide information, don't forget your cell phone – you always carry it on patrol, right? As a last resort, you can always try to call someone else to try to get needed information.

The second beneficiary of information you can provide is the W&OD staff. The Trail is nearly 45 miles long, and there is only a few staff to maintain it. They get spread a little thin. You are partly acting as their "eyes and ears" for information that needs to come to their attention. You can provide the staff information primarily with notifications (i.e., phone calls) or by submitting you patrol reports. Phone calls are for situations that need to come to the staff's attention *immediately* (e.g., safety hazards). Remember to always call emergency services first if there's an accident, injury, or serious security threat. If there are other things the staff needs to know, but not urgently, wait and put it in your report. For instance, the staff appreciates your reporting an abandoned bicycle, but it is not (usually) an urgent issue.

The third beneficiary of information provided by Patrol members is the Patrol organization and FOWOD. You primarily provide information to these organizations through your patrol reports and by interacting at meetings. (This year we are also experimenting with an e-mail list, web calendar, and other web services.)

Information you provide to us is helpful in a number of ways. First, it is vital that we simply know what is happening with out Patrol and its members. We also need this information to be able to report on our activities and to collate trail information over time. In addition, your input helps us better understand the dynamics of the Trail, which we strive to feed back to our members. This fuels our growth as an organization. Your reports are important to us, so please take a few minutes each time you patrol to fill one out.

Finally, local police need help in identifying individuals engaged in illegal, suspicious, or threatening behavior. Because our Patrol members will be spending a lot of hours on the

Trail, we will have a great opportunity to provide such service. Local law enforcement typically does not have the staff to maintain a regular presence on the Trail. We can help provide a service to our area by assisting them, albeit on an informal and unofficial basis.

On this point we need to stress that we are not agents or officials of local law enforcement – we are simply a volunteer citizen’s group that seeks to provide service and assistance to Trail users. We are an extra set of “eyes and ears” that is able to make observations and call for assistance when it is necessary. Another thing to stress is that safety comes first when you encounter illegal, suspicious, or threatening individuals – you should never try to intervene in these situations. Your sole responsibilities are to observe, call for assistance, and report.

8.3 Suggestions

8.3.1 Suggestions for Approaching Rules Violators

- You are not a rules “enforcer.” You can remind trail users of the Trail rules, but you have no authority to force them to comply.
- You don’t have to “catch” every violation, every time. A good rule is to ask yourself whether the rule violation is causing an immediate hazard.
- If you decide that you should approach a trail user to remind them of a rule, approach them with a friendly and open attitude. Identify yourself as a Patrol member.
- Ask them if they know about the rule and explain its purpose. Avoid confrontational remarks and accusations in this conversation. Keep it light.
- Suppress the urge to “chase down” any rules violators – it is rarely, if ever, justifiable. This often results in **you** causing a trail hazard and can create a confrontational attitude. You cannot impede a user or make them wait to hear you out.
- It is often helpful to provide a brochure or your Patrol identification card while you are correcting a rule violator.
- Some people will react negatively to **anything** you say to them about rules. Don’t get drawn in to a conversation with this type. If you encounter this attitude move on. If the situation is egregious enough, be sure to provide information (e.g., identifying the person and situation) in your report.
- If anyone reacts in a hostile or threatening manner, immediate break contact and notify authorities if appropriate.

8.3.2 Suggestions for How to Deal with Accidents

- Our first rule in dealing with accidents: prevent the second accident. An accident on the trail creates a chaotic situation. On a mixed-use trail with all kinds of users of varied abilities and traveling at varied speeds, the chaotic scene of an accident can very likely lead to a second accident. Your first thought should be to take action to prevent that second accident. Ask uninjured bystanders to move themselves and any equipment off the trail surface to reduce opportunities for a (second) crash.
- A good example of taking action is to start asking others to help you do certain things, as warranted by the situation. For instance, you can ask an uninjured trail user to stand and warn other trail users approaching the scene to slow down. You may be

surprised about how willing someone is to help, if they are told how by a knowledgeable person.

- By taking action, we don't really mean that you are "in charge." This is very important – while you may ask for help from others but you cannot order them to do things.
- Call the appropriate emergency services if the situation warrants it. It is a good idea to send another trail user to the nearest intersection to help guide the ambulance to the accident location. Don't leave the scene yourself if you can avoid it.
- See the following sections concerning Minor and Major Injuries.

8.3.3 Suggestions for How to Deal with Minor Injuries

- We discourage Patrol members from applying minor First Aid. The supplies we provide are for you to *give away*, not for you to apply. You must first remember that blood and bodily fluids pose a health threat – to you – and secondly, we live in a very litigious society.
- Do not provide advice about injury treatment.

8.3.4 Suggestions for How to Deal with Major Injuries

- We do not currently offer First Aid or CPR training although we are considering providing this training, for now we encourage you to seek such training on your own.
- When in doubt, call emergency services. This does not mean to call 911 for every splinter. But don't waste a lot of time assessing an ambiguous situation, especially if you are not qualified (and many of us aren't) to judge when someone needs immediate medical attention. Let the professionals decide.
- Be very cautious if you find the person has a damaged helmet. There is a great deal of damage that can occur by blunt force trauma to a person's head. If a helmet is damaged, it is almost a "given" that you should call emergency medical services.

8.3.5 Suggestions for How to Deal with Suspicious Persons

- If you see a crime being committed, get to a safe location and notify the police immediately.
- As you get to know particular sections of the Trail better, you will have a better feel for its "population." There are many homeless people that are on or near the Trail, especially in the more urban areas. Groups of children or young adults can also pose a higher likelihood of "incidents" occurring. Learn to recognize "suspicious" behavior.
- It is extremely important that you take the time to describe suspicious persons in your regular reporting.
- Report all sexual or harassing incidents, even if no physical contact was witnessed. The perpetrators of such incidents often escalate their activities over time.

9 Reporting Procedures

We provide two methods by which Patrol members can submit reports: e-mail and a web page form. This section describes the e-mail method. To find the web page form, follow the links for the Trail Patrol off the FOWOD website (www.wodfriends.org). The current report form is at: http://www.wodfriends.org/neopatrol_form.html

9.1 Report Motivation

It is important to us for you to file reports of your patrols. By keeping track of our activities, we further the following goals:

- Better management of our organization.
- Better service by building institutional knowledge.
- Better reporting of our activities to outside sources (e.g., sponsors).

It is true that just by patrolling you have performed a valuable service. However, it takes just a few minutes to file a week's worth of reports. Your report allows us to have a record of your activity and improves the service we provide. Furthermore, for you to get "credit" for having a completed a patrol, you'll have to file a report!

A general guideline is to submit a Patrol report within 24 hours of the patrol. However, as long as there is no imminent hazard or emergency, it is perfectly acceptable to save up a few reports and submit them all at one time. However, we do encourage you to **write** your reports immediately after you have completed your patrol, or you may forget some details. Also, if you lag more than a few reports behind, you may eventually neglect to ever submit them. You can avoid these problems by submitting your reports promptly.

9.2 Basic Report Outline

The basic outline for a report is as follows. We will explain each of these sections below. It greatly complicates our work in maintaining our records if you leave out one or more of these fields.

Patroller name(s).	List the names of all Patrol members that went on the patrol.
E-mail address(es).	E-mail address to be contacted for Patrol business.
Mode of patrol.	Mode of your patrol (e.g., walk, run, skate, cycling, horseback, or wheelchair).
Date.	The date of your patrol.
Patrol start time.	The start time of your patrol (include AM/PM).
Patrol end time.	The end time of your patrol (include AM/PM).
Eastern Mileage Marker.	The Eastern-most point in your patrol, expressed as a mile marker (MM) point.
Western Mileage Marker.	The Western-most point in your patrol, expressed as a mile marker (MM) point.
Incidents (all that apply):	Accident, Injury, Security, Mechanical, Safety, etc.
Comments.	A textual description of your patrol. (Can include any comments.)

9.3 Good Report Example

Even if “nothing happened” during a patrol, it is important that we record the fact that you did a patrol at a certain time, in a certain area, for a variety of reasons. First, it is never the case that “nothing happens” during a patrol. Sometimes you will see something that is of interest to someone, even though it can’t be categorized as an “incident.” For instance, you may see a child that is later reported missing. If we don’t know that you were at least in the same area, we won’t know to ask you if you might have seen the child. Second, we need to keep track of our activities so that we know how much of the trail we have patrolled during a given period of time. This is vital for reporting our activities to others and for improving our organization through feedback.

The following is an example of what we’d consider a good report.

Patroller: J. Smith

Mode: Cycling

Date: 4/18/2001

Start: 2:00 PM

End: 4:00 PM

East-MM: 12

West-MM: 21

Incidents: Safety

Comments: Yesterday, went for a patrol after lunch from Vienna to Sterling, and back again. Nothing much happened. Trail usage was fairly heavy. Noticed the trashcan near the Reston Town Center was placed too close to the trail. The W&OD staff should have it moved back.

9.4 E-mail Template

We discourage the use of e-mail for submitting reports. However, if this is the only option available to you, we suggest you create a template so that your reports are consistent and contain all of the necessary information. You should include the following fields in your e-mail template:

Patroller:

Mode:

Date:

Start Time:

End Time:

East-MM:

West-MM:

Incidents:

Comments:

Appendix A. Organizational Contact Information

Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA)

Office: 5400 Ox Road, Fairfax Station, VA 22039
 Phone: 703-352-5900
 Website: <http://www.nvrpa.org>

Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park (W&OD Trail)

Office: 21293 Smiths Switch Road, Ashburn VA, 20147-6016
 Phone: 703-729-0596
 Park Manager: Karl Mohle
 Park Ranger: Kevin Casalenuovo
 Website: <http://www.nvrpa.org/wod.html>

Friends of the Washington & Old Dominion Trail (FOWOD)

Website: <http://www.wodfriends.org>

Board Members:

Roger Neighborgall	(Falls Church) President
Pat Turner	(Sterling) Vice President
TBD	(TBD) Treasurer
TBD	(TBD) Corresponding Secretary
TBD	(Reston)
TBD	(Vienna)
David Jackino	(Sterling)
Bill McCarthy	(Vienna)
TBD	(Falls Church)
Anne Pastorkovich	(Vienna)
John Shea	(Reston)

W&OD Trail Patrol Officers

BJ Silvey	Patrol Chair
Ed Robichaud	Records Coordinator
William Dennen	Equipment Coordinator
David Jackino	FOWOD Liason
John Boone	Training Coordinator
Jeffrey Heil	Recruitment Coordinator

Appendix B. W&OD Trail Patrol Information

Emergency 911 (If 911 doesn't work, call the non-emergency numbers.)

Non-Emergency Numbers

Locality	Fire & Rescue	Police
Arlington County	703/558-2222	703/558-2222
Fairfax County	703/691-2131	703/691-2131
Falls Church	703/241-5053	703/241-5053
Vienna	703/691-2131	703/255-6366
Herndon	703/691-2131	703/435-6846
Leesburg	703/777-0637	703/777-3122
Loudoun County	703/777-0637	703/777-2222
Purcellville	703/777-0637	703/777-1021

When calling in an emergency, state that you are a Trail Patrol member on the W&OD Trail and give as much detail about your specific location as possible. Include the name of the town, city or community and the road crossings on each side of the location. Give specific details about the incident or the accident and the victim. In Arlington County, report the number and color (blue) of orientation markers posted along the Trail.

W&OD Trail Office 21293 Smiths Switch Rd
Ashburn, VA 20147-6016
703-729-0596

W&OD Trail Manager – Karl Mohle

W&OD Trail Email WOD@nvrpa.org

Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority

M-F 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. 703/352-5900 703/729-0596

W&OD Trail Rules

- No mopeds or other motorized vehicles are allowed on the trail.
- Pets must be on leash and under control at all times.
- Please place all trash in receptacles.
- The trail is open only during daylight hours.
- Travel in the right lane and move left to pass. Give appropriate warning to the trail users ahead.
- Move off the trail when you come to a stop.
- Pedestrians have the right-of-way unless otherwise posted.
- Travel at speeds that are safe and appropriate to trail conditions and usage.
- No bicycle or equestrian races or competitive speed training.¹
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.

1. Foot races by Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority permit only, and subject to the regulations established by the Park Authority.

Appendix C. Contact List for Supervised (Training) Patrols

The following Patrol members are available for supervised patrolling with new members. Contacting these members and scheduling the patrol is the responsibility of the new Patrol member.

Note: All of the Patrollers in the list are available for “Walk” mode Patrols. If your mode of trail-use is not accommodated in the table below, please notify the Patrol and we will make special arrangements to conduct your training.

Patroller Name	Home Area	Primary Mode	Phone	E-mail Address
John Boone	Ashburn	Cycle	(571) 723-5323	patrolJMB@gmail.com
William Dennen	Leesburg	Cycle	(703) 777-1978	wdennen@gmail.com
Jeffrey Heil	Falls Church	Cycle	(703) 532-7223	jeffreyandhelen@gmail.com
Larry Hodgins	Annandale	Cycle	(703) 256-2795	lhodgin@aol.com
David Jackino	Sterling	Cycle	(703) 516-1468	djackino@comcast.net
Norm Lisy	Alexandria	Cycle	(703) 519-8841	nlisy@comcast.net
Chan Mohny	Fairfax	Cycle	(703) 691-0748	Navajo549@cox.net
Ed Robichaud	Reston	Cycle	(703) 860-0108	edrobichaud@wdn.com
Neil Schlusel	Annandale	Cycle	(703) 698-0273	and-2@cox.net
B.J. Silvey	Reston	Cycle	(703) 860-5141	silveymarbj@comcast.net
Paul Wessel	McLean	Cycle	(703) 356-6447	PaulCWessel@aol.com
Terry Young	Leesburg	Cycle	(703) 777-6024	yung4evr@verizon.net

Yahoo Group

Be sure to join the patrol’s restricted “Yahoo group” at:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WODtrailpatrol/>

You will need a Yahoo ID & password to join this group. These are free and easy to set up – just click on the “Join this Group!” button and follow the sign-up directions.

This group is an important repository of messages, documents, and calendar information for the W&OD Trail Patrol.