



Appalachian Mountain Club Essential Eligibility Criteria

The Appalachian Mountain Club promotes the protection, enjoyment, and understanding of the mountains, forests, waters, and trails of the Appalachian region. We believe these resources have intrinsic worth and also provide recreational opportunities, spiritual renewal, and ecological and economic health for the region. Because successful conservation depends on active engagement with the outdoors, we encourage people to experience, learn about, and appreciate the natural world.

Participant safety and health are the top priorities for all AMC activities. To minimize risk to the group during an AMC program, each participant is expected to take personal responsibility, stay within individual limits, and contribute positively to the health and well-being of fellow participants and the group as a whole.

The AMC is committed to ensuring non-discriminatory access to its programs in accordance with federal law, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). While many AMC activities require participants to meet specific physical and cognitive requirements, reasonable accommodation will be considered where feasible and consistent with safety standards. The AMC's Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC) outline the objective requirements for participation in AMC-sponsored activities. These criteria serve as a resource for participants to assess their ability to engage safely and successfully in AMC activities.

With approximately 5000 activities offered annually by the AMC, individual activity requirements can vary greatly. Activity descriptions may contain additional or more specific requirements. For more information about AMC activities, please review the [Trip Policy Information Sheet](#). If you have concerns about your ability to meet certain criteria, please speak with the trip organizer to determine if reasonable accommodations can be made. If you have general questions about the AMC's EEC, or if you have concerns about the implementation of the EEC, please contact the Outdoor Leadership Department at leadership@outdoors.org.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Assistance of Trained Aides

In some circumstances outlined in the EEC, participants may be eligible to participate on an RMT 2025

AMC activity if they can meet an essential eligibility criterion with the assistance of a trained aide. Examples of trained aides include service animals, ASL translators, and individuals trained to assist a participant with physical, emotional, or communication requirements. In order for minors to meet the EEC, a parent, guardian or responsible adult who is known to the minor may act as an aide. If a participant requires a trained aide to meet any of the EEC, the participant or aide must notify the trip organizer beforehand, except in cases when an adult is accompanying a minor. The trained aide must meet the physical and cognitive requirements as outlined in the AMC's EEC

Activities vs. Outings

The AMC uses the term 'activity' to describe any outing, trip, or event sponsored by the organization. One type of activity the AMC sponsors – outings – are defined as staying within ½ mile of a road or full-service facility and requiring no physical or technical abilities other than basic mobility indoors and outdoors. There are specific essential eligibility criteria that apply only to outings (section I). All other activities are subject to the general EEC for activities (section II). Some activities, such as backpacking, climbing, and bicycling, have additional essential eligibility criteria (sections III – IX). Finally, individual activity and course descriptions may contain additional or more specific requirements.

Criteria with an Asterisk (*)

Throughout this document, an asterisk (*) is used to denote that individual activities may have a more challenging or more specific requirement than indicated in the criterion with the asterisk. Please refer to program materials or course descriptions or speak with the trip organizer if you have concerns or if you would like more detailed information.

I) ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR OUTINGS

All participants on AMC-sponsored outings must be able to complete the following requirements with or without assistance from a trained aide:

- 1.1 Effectively notify leaders or other participants of personal distress, injury, illness or the need for assistance.
- 1.2 Perceive, understand and follow instructions.
- 1.3 Perform necessary self-care, including maintaining adequate nutrition and hydration, dressing appropriately for environmental conditions, maintaining personal hygiene, and managing known medical conditions.
- 1.4 Work cooperatively as a member of a group and support a team approach, despite potentially challenging circumstances. This may require flexibility and the ability to compromise on an interpersonal or group level.

II) GENERAL ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR ACTIVITIES

All participants in all AMC-sponsored activities must be able to complete the following requirements without assistance:

Effectively warn others of potential or impending hazards such as falling rocks, slippery terrain, snow or rock slide, aggressive animals or insects, fast water, falling person, or other environmental hazards.

- 2.1 Effectively notify leaders or other participants of personal distress, injury, illness or the need for assistance.
- 2.2 Complete the preceding warnings and notifications up to a distance of 50 meters and in conditions with limited visibility and audibility, such as darkness, inclement weather, loud background noise due to high winds or fast-moving water, or terrain where a line of sight to other group members or leaders is not available.
- 2.3 Remain alert and focused for several hours at a time while traveling through open water, wilderness and other remote terrain.
- 2.4 Perceive, understand and follow basic instructions, such as a direction to move, stand still, grasp something, or other action required to avoid a major threat. Such basic instructions may be delivered in a hazardous or stressful environment.
- 2.5 Travel during periods of inclement weather.

All participants in all AMC-sponsored activities must be able to complete the following requirements with or without assistance from a trained aide:

- 2.6 Perceive, understand and follow detailed instructions on wilderness travel, risk management, personal care, hazard avoidance, and other topics.
- 2.7 Recognize and react appropriately to significant and apparent hazards, including ones previously identified by leaders or other participants.
- 2.8 Learn and perform necessary non-verbal communication systems for a given activity, such as hand signals, rope tugs, body movements, etc.
- 2.9 Perform necessary self-care in a remote and outdoor environment, including maintaining adequate nutrition and hydration, dressing appropriately for environmental conditions, maintaining personal hygiene, and managing personal (and, in some cases, group) safety gear.
- 2.10 Work cooperatively as a member of a group and support a team approach, despite potentially challenging circumstances. This may require flexibility and the ability to compromise on an interpersonal or group level.

- 2.11 Act in a manner consistent with Leave No Trace ethics. Participants do not need to know Leave No Trace ethics prior to participating in an AMC activity, however all participants must be able to follow leaders' directions regarding minimum impact guidelines. For more information, go to www.lnt.org.
- 2.12
- 2.13 Manage any known medical conditions in a remote environment for as long as two times the scheduled length of the trip.

III) ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR WILDERNESS HIKING OR SNOWSHOEING ACTIVITIES

In addition to the EEC for all AMC-sponsored activities listed in section II, participants on wilderness hiking and snowshoeing activities must be able to complete the following requirements without assistance:

- 3.1 Travel over uneven, variable terrain, including flat, uphill and downhill.*
- 3.2 If conditions become adverse, travel without stopping for breaks for one hour.

In addition to the EEC for all AMC-sponsored activities listed in section II, participants on wilderness hiking and snowshoeing activities must be able to complete the following requirements with or without assistance from a trained aide:

- 3.3 Carry personal and group gear required for the specific activity in a backpack or lumbar pack.*
- 3.4 Carry the minimum pack weight for at least two hours beyond the intended duration of the activity.*

IV) ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR ACTIVITIES WITH A CAMPING COMPONENT

In addition to the EEC for all AMC-sponsored activities listed in section II, participants on camping activities must be able to complete the following requirements with or without assistance from a trained aide:

- 4.1 Learn and safely perform the fundamental camping skills of finding a campsite, setting up a shelter, and cooking with a camp stove.
- 4.2 Travel about the campsite in order to participate in instructional sessions, attend to toileting needs, and contribute to individual and group related tasks as necessary.

V) ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR FLAT WATER CANOE, FLAT WATER KAYAK,
WHITEWATER, RIVER, OR LAKE ACTIVITIES

In addition to the EEC for all AMC-sponsored activities listed in section II, participants on boating activities must be able to complete the following requirements without assistance from a trained aide:

- 5.1 Wear all required safety gear, such as approved personal flotation device, spray skirt, Neoprene gloves, approved helmet, etc.
- 5.2 Control a paddle and pull it through the water in order to steer and propel the boat forward.
- 5.3 Hold their breath while under water and, while in the water wearing a properly fitted lifejacket, be able to independently turn from a face down to a face up position keeping their head above water.

In addition to the EEC for all AMC-sponsored activities listed in section II, participants on boating activities must be able to complete the following requirements with or without assistance from a trained aide:

- 5.4 Enter and exit a wet or dry watercraft.

VI) ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR ROCK CLIMBING OR MOUNTAINEERING ACTIVITIES

In addition to the EEC for all AMC-sponsored activities listed in section II, participants on rock climbing or mountaineering activities must be able to complete the following requirements without assistance from a trained aide:

- 6.1 Meet all of the unassisted Wilderness Hiking EEC (3.1 – 3.2).
- 6.2 Wear all required safety gear such as an approved harness, approved helmet, mountaineering boots, crampons ice axe/tool, etc.
- 6.3 Grip a rope firmly, grasp the rock face, and negotiate upwards on a climb.

In addition to the EEC for all AMC-sponsored activities listed in section II, participants on climbing and mountaineering activities must be able to complete the following requirements with or without assistance from a trained aide:

- 6.4 Meet all of the assisted or unassisted Wilderness Hiking EEC (3.3 – 3.4).

- 6.5 Provide a reliable belay to another climber during roped climbs. To do so, a participant must be able to reliably manipulate a climbing rope through a belay device.

VII) ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SKIING ACTIVITIES

In addition to the EEC for all AMC-sponsored activities listed in section II, participants on skiing activities must be able to complete the following requirements without assistance from a trained aide:

- 7.1 Withstand below freezing temperatures for two hours beyond the intended duration of the activity. *

In addition to the EEC for all AMC-sponsored activities listed in section II, participants on skiing activities must be able to complete the following requirements with or without assistance from a trained aide:

- 7.3 Move on skis over a variety of terrain conditions, including flat, uphill and downhill.*
- 7.4 After falling down while skiing, be able to get off the trail and get into position necessary to continue skiing.

VIII) ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR ROAD AND MOUNTAIN BIKING ACTIVITIES

In addition to the EEC for all AMC-sponsored activities listed in section II, participants on road and mountain biking activities must be able to complete the following requirements without assistance from a trained aide:

- 8.1 Pedal, steer, stop and negotiate a bike over a variety of terrain including flat, uphill and downhill.*
- 8.2 Wear all required safety gear, such as an approved helmet and reflectors.

In addition to the EEC for all AMC-sponsored activities listed in section II, participants on road and mountain biking activities must be able to complete the following requirements with or without assistance from a trained aide:

- 8.3 Get on and off of a bicycle.

IX) ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR TRAIL WORK AND STEWARDSHIP
ACTIVITIES

In addition to the EEC for all AMC-sponsored activities listed in section II, participants on trail work and stewardship activities must be able to complete the following requirements without assistance from a trained aide:

- 9.1 Meet all of the unassisted Wilderness Hiking EEC (3.1 – 3.2).
- 9.2 Wear all required safety gear such as an approved helmet, safety glasses, work gloves, boots, etc.

In addition to the EEC for all AMC-sponsored activities listed in section II, participants on trail work and stewardship activities must be able to complete the following requirements with or without assistance from a trained aide:

- 9.3 Meet all of the assisted or unassisted Wilderness Hiking EEC (3.3 – 3.4).
- 9.4 Perform manual labor tasks.