



RRCV Trip Leaders information and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The RRCV website has a copy of the FWD Victoria Trip Leaders handbook (FWDVTLH) so that should be the first reference point for new Trip Leaders and the FAQs below should refer to that, rather than restate any advice that is already covered. The FWDVTLH can be found on the RRCV web site under Members Area | Documents and Forms.

The following are some RRCV specific procedures in the format of FAQs that can be updated over time as new ones arise.

See the RRCV Convoy Procedures document for a more detailed discussion of convoy procedures.
See the RRCV Trip Report Guidelines for Torque for a more detailed discussion on writing a trip report.

FAQs – Pre-trip

1. What makes a good trip?

- Planning makes a trip interesting. Look for - good campsites, points of interest (like cattle men's huts, views, walks, waterfalls, etc.) .
- Don't try to drive too far each day. (see below).
- For long trips develop a detailed itinerary considering distance/day distance between fuel availability.

2. Planning an itinerary

- How far should I plan to drive each day?. 70-90 km on fairly good roads where low range is required but there are no major obstacles. 90-120 on high range forest roads, 350 km on good outback roads as a guide
- When planning an itinerary, it is useful to write down the roads you are going to use and the distances (measured on the map) for each section. Then using an average speed of 15 kph for low range forest roads and 50 kph for high range forest roads, the time between stops can be calculated. Allow an hour for lunch and 45 min for morning tea breaks. Any time you stop and have participants look around it will probably take a minimum of 30 minutes before everyone is moving again.

3. Do I need to do a reconnaissance?

- This is personal choice. If done, will give you confidence of the route and any obstacles. An alternative would be to speak other club members that know the area or to a local 4WD club for some local knowledge.
- At a minimum you should plan an itinerary as above.

4. Do I need an Emergency Plan?

- For long trips, complete an Emergency Plan and give it to Ground Charlie before the trip and the TEC at the start of the trip. (See FWDVTLH)
- Review the Victoria Police Outdoor Information Sheet and give it to Ground Charlie before the trip and the TEC at the start of the trip. The sheet can be found on the RRCV web site under Members Area | Documents and Forms.

5. I need to prepare a Trip Leaders folder to take with me – what should be in it

- Paper maps for covering the trip area
- Driver briefing checklist (see below)
- Vehicle inspection checklist (see below)



- Trip attendance sheet (including mobile numbers). You need to have a record of all participants to check everyone is there at the start or to contact participants if the convoy is out of UHF range.
- These FAQ's
- FWD Victoria Trip Incident Report Form x5 (available on RRCV the web site)
- FDW Victoria Trip Accident Form x5 (available on RRCV the web site)
- FWD Victoria Accident Survey Form x5 (available on RRCV the web site)
- Temporary member form x5 in case any non-members turn up and have not registered and temporary members online
- Personal Detail forms x10 for those who forgot to bring them along
- Medical Emergency checklist?

6. What else do I need for a long or remote trip?

Some of the following:

- Permits
- Ground Charlie (see FWDVTLH)
- Detailed itinerary (see above)
- Arrange to borrow the club's Sat phone or hire one.
- Sat phone, list of emergency phone numbers and contact numbers in the area you are travelling to (no phone books or google in the remote area and the sat phone's can't access the web)
- Pre-arranged call times to Ground Charlie
- EPIRB
- Develop and emergency plan (see above)

7. What special trip requirements should I send to participants?

- Select from any or all of the following: second spare, extra water, extra fuel, sat phone, no camper trailers, snow chains, etc

8. How to advertise the trip?

- Contact the trip coordinator.
- Complete the trip description template as a MS Word document
- Decide on a date.
- The trip coordinator will post the trip and email club members.
- Try to attend the club meeting(s) before the event to promote the trip and/or field any questions.

9. What else to do before the trip starts?

- The RRCV web system will generate reminder emails to all trip participants, however the Trip Leader should send some trip specific emails that contain some or all of the following, particularly the reminder to print and complete Personal Details Forms before they leave home, which will save messing around at the start of the trip.
- Email all trip participants with itinerary and reminders of special trip requirements.
- Get mobile phone numbers for all participants.
- Find out the names of all people in all vehicles and include them on the participants list. If there are any non-members, then remind participants that they MUST be registered online as temporary members prior to the commencement of the trip



- Remind participants to bring completed Personal Details Forms
- For remote trips or where no mobile coverage is expected, arrange to borrow the club's Sat phone or hire one.
- Sat phone, list of emergency phone numbers and contact numbers in the area you are travelling to (no phone books or google in the remote area and the sat phone's can't access the web)

10. Can I bring my pets?

- It is club policy that no pets are allowed on trips.
- The club regularly goes through national parks and areas that forbid domestic pets.

11. How to deal with new members or those who have not done driver training

- Assess their 4WD driving skills with respect to trip difficulty. Suggest they do an easier trip if not sure.

FAQs – At the start of the Trip

12. What to do at the trip briefing.

- PD forms – ?? to collect
- Welcome any new members or those who have not been on a trip before
- Ask all members to introduce themselves to the group
- Tell participants that if unsure about any trip obstacles or the route, use the radio and ask for help
- Discuss the trip breaks – morning tea, lunch, reach the camp at night
- Discuss when to air down – now or later
- Convoy procedures – either Stop & Go, i.e.: get acknowledgement from person behind (lights flash or on radio) or Mark the Corner, i.e.: stop on the corner in a safe place, indicate the direction to go and join the convoy immediately before TEC. Trip leader will indicate which method on a corner by corner basis. See the RRCV Convoy Procedures document for a more detailed discussion of convoy procedures.
- Remind participants to leave appropriate distance between vehicles in the convoy – for dust to settle or emergency stops/retries when ascending/descending difficult or slippery terrain.
- TEC – who it is and their vehicle.
- Trip reporter – written and verbal. Make sure the written Trip Reporter is aware of and complies with the guidelines for writing a Trip Report. They are on the RRCV web site – Members Area | Documents and Forms. It is important to have this agreed at the start of the trip so that the trip reporter(s) can take notes and/or photos for their reports.
- Radio channel and radio check
- Departure time – give participants some warning – e.g. 5 mins, 10 mins or ??

13. How do I assess participant's vehicles and should I do it?

It is useful to briefly take a look at participant's vehicles, particularly if they are temporary members. This may alert you to potential issues during the trip and in extreme cases lead to recommending that a participant should not commence the trip.

Things to look for (depending on trip difficulty) would be.

- Sufficient vehicle clearance (200mm or greater for medium/hard/extreme trips)
- Tyres in good condition and with a reasonable profile (60 or greater for medium/hard/extreme trips)
- Recovery points
- Low range capability



- UHF radio for keeping in touch with the convoy

14. Temporary Members.

- They MUST sign up and pay online before the start of the trip
- Assess their suitability, skills and vehicle preparation prior to accepting them onto the trip.
- If they turn up and haven't paid, one of the following MUST be done before the trip starts.
 - If you have web access at the start point of the trip, register them and pay online.
 - Fill out a hard copy of the Temp Member form at the start of the trip (you should always take some hard copies for this purpose), record date and time on the form and get another member to witness the form. Collect the fee (\$15) and when you next have web access, register the temp member, pay with your credit card and keep the cash.

FAQs – During the Trip

15. Daily routine before setting off (and if necessary during the driving day).

- Brief all participants on the route for the day, driving conditions, rest stops -essentially a mini driver briefing
- Based on the Trip Leaders observation from previous days, the convoy procedures may need to be reiterated before setting off for the day, at driving breaks or around the campfire at night. This may particularly apply to vehicle separation to allow for dust to settle or emergency stops/retries when ascending/descending difficult or slippery terrain.
- Radio check before setting off.
- Ask all drivers to do a vehicle check – oil, water, tyres, anything loose under body or bonnet. Particularly look for loose batteries, rubbing hoses, low liquid levels, loose wheel nuts, etc.
- Do a vehicle walk around – “kick the tyres”.

16. How to handle mechanical problems on a trip?

- Use skills of all participants, you don't have to solve all issues yourself.
- If you have phone coverage call another club member who may have skills or knowledge on how to fix an issue.
- Assess ability to recover/tow a broken vehicle to a main/major road for transportation.
- May need to change itinerary/trip route.
- Do not separate participants unless there is a clear plan to re-join the group and there is another experienced trip leader in the group.

17. What if there is an Incident or Accident during the trip?

- Complete the FWD Victoria Trip Incident Report Form or FWD Victoria Trip Accident Report Form
- Complete the FWD Victoria Trip Accident Survey Form

18. What if a participant wants to leave the trip?

- Make sure they have a clear, low risk exit path. If the exit path requires any difficult tracks or obstacles they should not exit on their own.



19. What if trip conditions change?

- Don't be afraid to cut the trip short if there is risk of vehicle damage or conditions are beyond some drivers. Participants will most likely thank you and the trip can always be done another day.

20. Alcohol consumption during trip driving breaks?

- The RRCV club policy is that no alcohol is to be consumed by drivers or their passengers before or during the driving day. There is no issue once the day's driving is completed and indeed the evening "drinks and nibbles" around the campfire is a great way to unwind and share experiences of the day.

FAQs – At the end of the Trip

21. What to do at the end of the trip?

- Meet at a local town for coffee
- Hand back P D Forms,
- Confirm trip reporters (verbal and written)
- Check everyone knows the way home.

22. What to do after the Trip

- Follow-up the trip reporters. Make sure the written Trip Reporter is aware of and complies with the guidelines for writing a Trip Report. They are on the RRCV web site – Members Area | Documents and Forms
- Call anyone on the trip that left early or had any difficulties to ensure they got home OK.
- If you have a Ground Charlie notify them the trip is complete
- If you have notified Police through a Trip Intentions Form notify them the trip is complete
- Notify the club and FWD Victoria of any Incident or Accidents and forward the relevant forms to the club and/or FWD Victoria
- Send a brief post trip report on the event to the Trip Co-ordinator to be added to the trip page on the website. For example tracks taken, track conditions, locations of campsites, travel times each day, any info for trip leaders using this trip in the future.

Thanks to Graeme Carter for pulling this together.