



Chicago Area Runners Association
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CARA Training Group Leader Guide

Thank you for volunteering to serve as a group leader for CARA training. Group Leaders are the lifeblood of CARA training programs. You affect a lot of people in an incredible way as they chase their goals. As you take on the role of group leading, whether it's the first time or you're a veteran, please remember you have three primary goals that you ultimately are responsible for achieving for your group:

SAFETY | PACING | ORGANIZATION

Safety:

- At minimum one group leader runs in the front of the group and one in the back. The group leader who is best at pacing should be in the front.
- Insure that your group runs no more than two abreast. This will only occur through the direction of the group leader.
- Keep your runners on the right side of the path insuring that your group runs in an organized manner.
- Make calls when passing, when obstacles are on the path, when stopping and when significant turns are approaching. If you use hand signals (recommended) make sure your group knows the signals before the run.
- Look back before passing persons or obstructions on the path to insure that cyclist, skaters or other faster moving persons are not coming through from behind.
- Encourage your runners not to wear headphones (this is CARA policy). This is for safety, so you can communicate with them, and so they can converse with the group.

Pacing:

- Run your assigned pace within 10-seconds per mile. Respond with a pace change if your group is off-target. A GPS watched is recommended.
- Groups should not purposely exceed pace or disregard being off pace. An exception being in poor weather or when poor trail conditions are present. Here groups may decrease pace and run based on effort.
- If a runner in your group is not able to keep pace advise them to switch groups for the next run.

Organization:

- Insure that the runners in your group are wearing shoe tags. This allows hydration workers to know who is in the program. The shoe tag has emergency contact information on the back. Only registered runners with shoe tags may run with CARA training programs unless approved otherwise by CARA. This is both for liability reasons and to protect the viability of the program.
- With your fellow group leaders organize your group before the run starts. Before starting tell your group who the group leaders are, how far the group is going and what pace group they are in. Be vocal and clear with instruction. Remember, there are new runners joining all the time. Don't assume everyone knows what's going on.
- Get to know your runners. Spend a few minutes before, during or after each run learning the names of each runner. The more you can do to create community the better experience each of your runners will have. Insure that the group is always welcoming to newcomers.
- It is important that you are at every run. If you must miss for a pre-planned reason we understand, but please let your site coordinator and the interim CARA group leader coordinator (Greg Hipp greg@cararuns.org) know in advance.
- Follow the training plan. As a group leader you are responsible for following the training plan at training sessions even if your personal target race is different. If you need to go further do so after your group leading responsibilities are complete.

Other Notes:

- If there is an emergency call 911 and never leave a runner on the path alone. Insure that the site coordinator knows if there was a problem on the run.
- Encourage, motivate and guide your runners as they chase their goals. When they need help with something you aren't prepared to help with direct them to CARA staff (training@cararuns.org).
- Read all CARA communications and training newsletters. You are responsible for knowing what is going on within your training program. Group leaders may not unsubscribe from CARA communication e-mails.