

GUIDELINES FOR CAR CARAVANS

It's a beautiful weekend and you're headed to the mountains with 12 hikers in 5 cars. The question is: *How do you ensure that all the hikers get to the designated trailhead at the appointed time?*

Over the years of many outings, some with disastrous results -- losing cars, losing hikers, wasting precious daylight hiking time -- we've developed a few guidelines which help smooth this sometimes complicated and difficult task.

- * Get gasoline in all vehicles the day before the hike.
- * Have written instructions on how to get from the meeting place to the trailhead. (Responsibility of the hike leader.) A map may help.
- * Observe all speed limits.
- * Agree on a first rest stop before leaving the meeting place. *McDonalds at Exit 60 (Sweetwater) is a good first stop if you're headed north on I75.*
- * *Everyone in the caravan, is responsible for being alert to cars falling behind, distress signals or lost vehicles.*
- * *The lead driver waits in the parking lot, before exiting onto the highway, until all cars are in line.*
- * *The lead driver, when entering a highway or road, waits until there is sufficient space in the line of traffic for all cars in the caravan to enter.*
- * *Avoid weaving in and out of traffic. Get in one lane, and stay there, if possible.*
- * *The lead driver activates signals well in advance of turns.*
- * *When an "alien" vehicle gets in the caravan, all cars in the caravan slow down, until the "alien" exits.*
- * *If someone in a car other than the lead car needs a rest stop, other than the designated ones, the driver of that car pulls out of the caravan, passes the other cars and moves into the lead position to signal to exit the highway. If it is not possible to get into the lead position, the driver signals by blowing the horn, or flashing lights. As noted before, everyone in the caravan is responsible for watching for such distress signals.*
- * *When driving through small towns a traffic signal may stop some cars in the caravan. If this happens, the lead vehicles slow down, until the other cars catch up. In some instances, it may be necessary for the lead vehicles to pull off the highway onto a parking lot to wait for the other vehicles.*

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** When driving through large cities on the freeway, such as through Knoxville, it may not be possible to keep all cars together. It helps to get into one of the center lanes which go through the city. When on the outskirts of the city, the lead vehicles slow down within a safe speed until all cars are in line again. Sometimes you may decide in advance on a rest stop on the outskirts of the city.*

Good driving, and let us know if you have other suggestions!