



**LEAVE NO TRACE  
SKILLS COURSE GUIDELINES**

**Table of Contents**

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>TRAINING ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTORS</b>	<b>4</b>
Organizations Offering Skills Courses	4
Individual Level 1 or 2 Instructors Offering Skills Courses	4
<b>LEAVE NO TRACE SKILLS COURSE</b>	<b>6</b>
Skills Course: Curriculum Content	6
Core Components for the Leave No Trace Skills Course Curriculum	6
Skills Course: Lead Instructor	6
Skills Course: Co-instructors	6
Skills Course: Enrollment	7
Skills Course: Cost	7
Skills Course: Completion	7

## **INTRODUCTION**

As the number of institutions, organizations, individuals, and agencies interested in offering Leave No Trace training programs increases, so does the continued importance of having standardized guidelines that provide a framework for effective Leave No Trace training.

The goals for these Training Guidelines are five-fold:

- To strive for consistent, quality training for all Leave No Trace course participants.
- To provide an easily implemented and inclusive training structure that encourages more people to teach and participate in training.
- To establish a structure allowing the Leave No Trace organization to track and quantify training efforts.
- To clarify the role of the Leave No Trace Organization regarding training institutions and individual instructors.
- To identify inherent risks in outdoor activities and to discuss warnings and other safety information about Leave No Trace courses.

Leave No Trace Skills Courses emphasize skills and techniques essential to minimum impact outdoor ethics and education. A Leave No Trace Skills Course is a modified version of a Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor Course. The Skills Course focuses on learning and practicing the Leave No Trace 7 Principles

Note to Level 1 and Level 2 Instructors: The Leave No Trace Skills Course is a completely instructor-led course as participants are not assigned teaching topics like a Level 1 Instructor Course.

**Notice:** The Leave No Trace Skills Course curriculum focuses on techniques for learning minimum-impact outdoor skills and ethics. Leave No Trace courses do not teach specific outdoor skills such as mountain climbing, river crossings, camping, etc. However, due to the nature of the Leave No Trace program, many courses are taught in outdoor settings. Engaging in outdoor activities involves inherent or other risks and dangers that can lead to injury, property damage, or even death. In addition, Leave No Trace outdoor ethics and principles are only effective if they are accurately relayed and taught to course participants. For these reasons, Leave No Trace requires organizations and individuals interested in conducting Leave No Trace courses to enter into a [Training Agreement](#) with the Leave No Trace organization and to review and follow the guidelines listed here before, during, and after conducting courses. The Leave No Trace organization does not control, teach or conduct the course but

provides organizations and individuals with nationally approved materials to assist in teaching Leave No Trace courses. All organizations and individuals conducting Leave No Trace courses act as independent contractors and are solely responsible for conducting the courses.

Individuals interested in participating in a Leave No Trace field-based course should have basic outdoor travel and camping skills. Participants should understand that they are responsible for their safety and assume responsibility for injuries resulting from the inherent risks of recreational activities.

The Leave No Trace organization does not warrant or guarantee the quality or expertise of any individual or organization providing a Leave No Trace course. Those interested in a Leave No Trace course are advised to independently review and examine the qualifications of individuals or organizations planning to conduct Leave No Trace courses.

Leave No Trace accepts no legal or otherwise responsibility for any course, workshop, event, or session.

# TRAINING ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTORS

## Organizations Offering Skills Courses

Organizations offering Leave No Trace Skills Courses must comply with the Leave No Trace [Training Agreement](#) and follow the Guidelines included below:

1. The organization must be a current [Community Partner](#).
2. Possess the appropriate levels of insurance and provide current Certificates of Insurance to be kept on file at Leave No Trace for the period the organization conducts courses.
3. Assuring that Instructors are current in their Leave No Trace certifications.
4. Assuring staff, including any proposed Leave No Trace lead instructors and/or co-instructors, are appropriately trained in outdoor leadership/instruction skills and maintain appropriate levels of emergency medical certification.
5. Distributing the Leave No Trace introduction and discussion of the [Course Participant Acknowledgement, Assumption of Risks, Release, and Indemnity Agreement](#).
6. Following the "Core Components for Leave No Trace Skills Course Curriculum" and additional Guidelines for courses outlined below in any Leave No Trace Skills Course.

## Individual Level 1 or 2 Instructors Offering Skills Courses

Those who have completed the Level 1, 2, or 3 Leave No Trace Instructor Courses can conduct the Leave No Trace Skills Course. Instructors do not need to be affiliated with an organization to offer the Leave No Trace Skills Course. Instructors who are not affiliated with a current partner of Leave No Trace must be a current [individual member](#) of Leave No Trace, comply with the Leave No Trace [Training Agreement](#), and follow the Guidelines included below:

1. Possessing appropriate levels of insurance (federal tort claim coverage is acceptable) as required by these guidelines.
2. Be current in Leave No Trace certifications.
3. Maintaining appropriate levels of emergency medical certification as required by these guidelines.
4. Distributing the Leave No Trace introduction and discussion of the [Course Participant Acknowledgement, Assumption of Risks, Release, and Indemnity Agreement](#) as required by these guidelines.

5. Following the “Core Components for Leave No Trace Skills Course Curriculum” and additional Guidelines for courses outlined below in any Leave No Trace Skills Course.

Liability insurance for individual Instructors may be obtained via a private insurer (contact Leave No Trace for details). See the Leave No Trace [Training Agreement](#) for specifics regarding required liability coverage levels for different course types.

# LEAVE NO TRACE SKILLS COURSE

## **Skills Course: Curriculum Content**

A Leave No Trace Skills Course is a modified version of a Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor Course. The Skills Course is shorter, less comprehensive, and less expensive to conduct than a Level 1 Course. Like Level 1 Courses, Skills Courses emphasize skills and techniques essential to Leave No Trace minimum impact ethics, but participants are not required to teach a Leave No Trace lesson. Instead, the course focuses on participants learning practical skills and ethics. Sample Skills Course curricula and other resources are available through the Leave No Trace organization. A qualified lead instructor and a qualified co-instructor must staff a Skills Course.

## **Core Components for the Leave No Trace Skills Course Curriculum**

1. A minimum of sixteen (16) total hours of experiential instruction, an overnight experience is recommended but not required (Instructors can offer this training in a frontcountry or backcountry setting).
2. The Principles and Ethics of Leave No Trace.
3. Leave No Trace skills, techniques, understanding, and practice.
4. General overview of the national Leave No Trace program.

## **Skills Course: Lead Instructor**

The lead instructor for a Skills Course must be a Leave No Trace Level 1, 2, or 3 Instructor. Skills Course lead instructors should have training and experience in outdoor leadership/instruction skills and maintain appropriate levels of emergency medical certification. At a minimum, the lead instructor should maintain current Standard First Aid and CPR certifications. Instructors wishing to offer Skills Courses must maintain their certification by taking the Leave No Trace Recertification Course every two (2) years to remain certified. Additionally, any instructor offering Skills Courses and providing a Certificate of Completion must be a current [Member of Leave No Trace](#) or the organization sponsoring the course must be a [Partner](#).

## **Skills Course: Co-instructors**

A qualified co-instructor is required for all Leave No Trace Skills Courses.

- A co-instructor for a Skills Course can be a Level 1, 2, or 3 Instructor or a person with advanced knowledge and understanding of Leave No Trace

Principles, skills, and ethics. The lead instructor should ensure that a co-instructor without Leave No Trace Level 1, 2, or 3 instructor training has the necessary background to co-instruct.

- Co-instructors should have experience as teachers/trainers within their respective organizations, ideally including instruction on at least one overnight Leave No Trace course.
- Co-instructors should have training and experience in outdoor leadership/instruction skills and appropriate levels of emergency medical certification. At a minimum, co-instructors should maintain current Standard First Aid and CPR certifications.

### **Skills Course: Enrollment**

Skills Courses do not have a minimum or maximum participant restriction. However, Leave No Trace strives to keep the instructor-to-student ratio low to enhance learning opportunities. A 1 to 6 instructor-to-participant ratio is highly recommended.

Given the high level of interest in these courses, all courses open to the public should be shared with the Leave No Trace organization to post on the Upcoming Courses webpage. To post your course to the Leave No Trace website, please email a brief course description, including dates, times, costs, contact, and registration information to [Training@LNT.org](mailto:Training@LNT.org).

Lead instructors for Skills Courses must contact land managers at the intended course location before any course to ensure compliance with permitting and group size requirements.

### **Skills Course: Cost**

The Leave No Trace organization does not set course costs for Skills Courses, but a range of \$50 to \$85 per person, depending on course logistics and locations, is recommended. Course leaders and/or organizations should set the cost of Skills Courses to cover material, travel, staff, and other costs.

### **Skills Course: Completion**

Upon completing a Leave No Trace Skills Course, each participant can receive a Certificate of Completion from Leave No Trace if the instructor's certification and membership/partnership are current. Skills Course instructors must submit the course roster to the Leave No Trace organization via the [online roster submission form](#).

Successful course completion requires participation in all course activities and teaching exercises. Those who complete the Skills Course are equipped to:

- Understand and practice state-of-the-art minimum impact techniques on personal outdoor excursions.
- Discuss the 7 Principles and outdoor ethics with others.
- Co-instruct Leave No Trace Skills Courses with a certified Leave No Trace Level 1, 2, or 3 Instructor.
- Teach Leave No Trace Workshops. However, being a Leave No Trace Level 1 or Level 2 Instructor is required to provide Certificates of Completion.

Instructors of a Skills Course reserve the right to deny a Certificate of Completion if, in the eyes of both instructors, the participant has not:

1. Attended and participated in the entire course.
2. Exhibited behavior consistent with the Leave No Trace philosophy.

Should a course participant display or engage in any of the aforementioned, adequate documentation is required by the course instructors. It should be forwarded to Leave No Trace upon course completion.