



**AMERICA'S  
WALKING CLUB**

— ESTABLISHED 1976 —

## **Trailmaster Guide and Certification Examination**

Reading of this enclosed manual, along with the AVA Policy Manual and published event documents found on the AVA website, [ava.org](http://ava.org), is a basic requirement and a major step forward for earning certification in the American Volkssport Association.

Some subject lessons in this manual include the art of trail making, how to create interesting routes, effective marking of routes, and skills for obtaining permits and preparing event budgets. The actual examination is found in Attachment B.

**National Office  
American Volkssport  
Association**

1032 S. Alamo St.  
San Antonio, Texas 78210

Phone: 210-659-2112

Fax: 210-659-1212

Email: [henry@ava.org](mailto:henry@ava.org)

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# Preface

Trailmaster certification will make you a knowledgeable resource in the art of volkswalk trail making, whether creating interesting routes, marking them, or writing accurate and informative instructions for them. Each walk is unique, and the chosen start, surrounding area, and distances to be offered influence what you can do. Your job is to apply your skills to make the most out of each situation. Remember, there is no one right way to design and mark or write instructions for a particular route, only more or less better ways depending on the circumstances.

Use the knowledge in this guide to help your club, and others when they ask, create memorable walks. When you lend your talent, do so in a positive way, in the spirit of making walks better. Those who have gone before you tried to do their best; acknowledge that when offering help or constructive criticism.

This guide is written for both the Event Planning Committee and Trailmaster. Some clubs have the Trailmaster responsible for everything for an event and others have an Event Committee to divide the tasks so all may learn the detail that is involved in planning for a Traditional Event.

All AVA sanctioned volkssport events may be co-sponsored and conducted with either for-profit groups or non-profit groups provided all AVA policies and requirements are met prior to sanctioning the event which must be reviewed by the Executive Director.

Inquiries concerning AVA-approved events in non-IVV countries must be addressed to the IVV Head Office.

The Trailmaster Certification Patch will be presented to qualified individuals as determined by various Regional Directors. A certificate is to be prepared by the RD and sent for signature to the AVA President noting the individual is a qualified Trailmaster. Further, the Award will be listed in the Biennial Awards booklet.

**This training will first give a general outline of the items to be done for hosted Events. Farther through this document the how-to details will be defined. Responsibilities for certain actions and schedules will vary from club-to-club.**

## **EVENT CHAIR (TRAILMASTER) OVERVIEW AND CHECKLIST FOR REGULAR (HOSTED) EVENT**

- A. Initial Actions for Establishing an Event – 7 to 18 months before event date.
  - 1. Select a possible event to propose to the club or accept Event Chair position for an event already approved by the club.
  - 2. Select a good starting point & get approval to use it:
    - a. Fits theme of the walk
    - b. Restrooms & water available
    - c. Shelter for registration, starting, & finish.
  - 3. Decide on a general route for the walk in order to determine walk length & difficulty.
- B. Initiate sanctioning of the walk using the AVA web page no later than 90 days before planned event date (earlier sanctioning is more desirable) and start advertising the event as early as possible.
  - 1. Fill in the desired date(s), type of event (walk, bike, swim, etc.), distances (usually 10 km & 5 km routes), Starting Point, city & state where event will occur, point of contact information, and directions to the Start Point.
  - 2. Check the AVA site in about a week to see if the walk has been sanctioned.
  - 3. Add additional details about the walk to the AVA event sanction request (whether strollers & handicapped persons can use route, additional insured certificate if needed, etc.).
  - 4. Make a copy of the fully sanctioned event with a sanction number.
  - 5. Add any additional descriptive information to the AVA web page that will create interest in the event.
  - 6. Prepare a flyer to be distributed by club members at events preceding the subject club event.
  - 7. Submit ads to State or Regional Volkssport Newsletters as is custom in your club.
- C. Refine the walk route by about 1 month or earlier from the planned event date.
  - 1. Decide the exact routes for each walk distance sanctioned.
  - 2. Get approval to use trails or cross property where necessary.
  - 3. Measure the routes accurately.
  - 4. Select good checkpoint(s) with shelter, water, & restroom, and get approval to use it.
  - 5. Make a walk map and write walk directions for each walk distance.
  - 6. Check routes for any potential problems about 2 weeks before the event.

#### D. Pre-Event administrative actions

1. Draft a schedule of volunteer positions by duty & time (e.g., Registration 8:00 to 10:00 am) 1 to 2 months before the event.
2. Solicit volunteers from the club & other sources starting 1 to 2 months before the event.
3. Organize a Workers Walk, when necessary, about 2 weeks before the event.
4. Make a list of supplies and refreshments needed about 2 weeks before the event.
5. Check with club officers to ensure Event Stamp arrives no later than 1 week before the event.
6. Arrange with Club Treasurer 1 week prior to the event to have \$30 to \$70 in \$1 bills.
7. After refining maps & directions, make sufficient copies of each no later than 2 days before the event.
8. Pick up supplies from Club Storage at least 2 days before the event : Registration Box, Checkpoint Box(es), trail marking material (arrows & ribbon) color coded to each route distance, Volkswalk directional signs, trail marking & stripping tools & supplies (stapler, tape, zip ties, etc.), tables, chairs, water jugs, paper cups, doggie water dishes, IVV/AVA flag, club flag, & pop-up shelter when needed.
9. Check contents of Registration & Checkpoint Boxes to ensure all the needed items are there.
10. Pick up hard candy if not already in Registration & Checkpoint boxes.
11. The day before the event, pick up ice for water jugs, if needed, & any refreshments to be offered.

#### E. Brief your trail marking team & mark the trails with them the day before the event.

1. Mark every trail for the person doing their first walk event.
2. Place directional arrows for each route at the Start Point to get people started in the right direction.
3. Use double arrows to indicate turns to the right or left.
4. Use single arrows and/or colored tape to ensure walkers' confidence they are on the trail.

#### F. Day of Event actions

1. You are in charge of the trails, so ensure that any deficiencies are corrected.
2. Check trail early before the event start time to correct for vandalism & weather effects on markings.
3. Ensure the Checkpoint is specially marked.
4. Establish a means of communicating with Start/Finish & Checkpoint volunteers & ensure all have your cell phone number.
5. Ensure requested supplies and other items get to the Checkpoint.
6. Brief your trail stripping team, provide them with the tools they will need, & start them on their task when you are sure that markings will not be removed before the last walker needs to see them.
7. Check the trails yourself within a day or two to ensure markings have been removed.

## **Traditional Hosted Events Selecting the Route**

The first part of selecting the route is deciding where you want walkers to see.

1. A park
2. A particular building or neighborhood
3. Something scenic (a trail, overlook, mountain range.
4. Something of historical significance (building, memorial, monument, site)
5. Something tied to a special occasion (convention, meeting local festival)
6. Something tied to an AVA Special Program or Club Challenge.

Now that you have decided on what to see, the most important consideration is safety.

1. Will walkers have to walk on narrow road shoulders?
2. Are there adequate crosswalks and are they at traffic lights or otherwise controlled?
3. If your event is in the mountains, will the route be over paths that are very narrow?
4. Your route should be as safe as you can possibly make it. If you have a doubt, it is probably unsafe and should be either re-routed or discarded.

Walker comfort is the next consideration.

1. Are there restrooms along the route?
2. Are there restrooms at the start/finish?
3. If the route is in the mountains, will you be able to service a checkpoint?
4. If the route is in the city, are there places to stop and get something to drink?
5. Below are some considerations for identifying walker comfort needs:
  - What is the distance between restrooms?
  - Will you need to rent a portable restroom for the start/finish?
  - Is there shade? (If the weather is hot) – shelter? (If the weather is rainy)
  - Handicap/wheelchair access?
  - Is the route: dog friendly and stroller accessible?
  - Can you service a checkpoint easily?
  - Is communication between start pot and check point adequate (cell service)?

## Selecting the Start/Finish Area for a Hosted Walk Event

**Parking.** The start/finish must have sufficient parking to accommodate your guests. What constitutes adequate parking is up to you and the club.

**Proximity of restroom facilities.** Your start point is required to have restrooms at or near the start. Will you need to rent a porta-potty?

**Proximity of water.** Your club must have water at the start/finish. Walker comfort and prevention of dehydration is important. Having a dog water dish available is a nice idea for walkers that bring their dogs.

**Space.** There should be room for at least one start table, one finish table, a New Walker Information table and for walk brochures, a table for filling out registration/start cards, and there should also be enough space for people to sit around after the event to talk and/or eat. An aspect of our sport is a social one. If people can sit around and talk, they are more likely to have fun. Here's a good opportunity to have food and/or another liquid drink of some sort, perhaps coffee, perhaps juice, perhaps cookies, or pieces of fruit. Some clubs serve soups or have a contest during the walk. There should be enough space to avoid bottle necks at the start and finish tables.

**Visibility.** Display your club IVV banner and other banners to help walkers find your start area. Directional signs along the driving route will aide in getting walkers to your event.

**Accessibility.** Will you be able to set up your start/finish easily? Plan for how you will get your start/finish materials to the start point and unloading.



## **The Checkpoint(s)**

IVV rules state we should have a checkpoint approximately every 5 km, and the checkpoint must have water. The reason for having checkpoints is to supply your customer with the comfort of water, some conversation on the route, assurance that they are on the correct route, and if deemed necessary, restroom facilities. Checkpoints should have a method of showing that the customer was there. Examples are a stamp or a punch through the start card. Self-help checkpoints can have something like a punch attached to the water jug, or even a stamp sitting on top of the water jug so the walker can stamp their own card.

Checkpoint equipment is usually a table capable of holding a water jug, a trash bag, paper cups to drink from, a small container for a treat and chairs. If the checkpoint is in a park, set up near a water fountain and/or trash receptacle to save yourself some effort.

One of the considerations for where to place the checkpoint is weather. If you don't have a sheltered location, Easy Up 10ft x 10ft canopy shelters are relatively easy to set up.

For customer safety, checkpoint personnel should have a login sheet with numbers assigned by the starting point table from 1 to as many people as you expect to participate. As your customers pass the checkpoint, your volunteers X out their start number on the number sheet. This is done to be sure that everyone is off the route when it is time to close the checkpoint. Communication with the start point will let them know the final number issued by the start point. When all the numbers have been verified at the checkpoint, the checkpoint people can break down the checkpoint, and prepare the checkpoint equipment for transport.

## **Measuring the Route**

The most accurate way to measure a route is with a wheel. Online measurement methods or driving the route are good preliminary methods to get the distance measured. As a measurement of the route, these preliminary methods are encouraged. But, once you think you have a sufficiently long route, the next step is to use a wheel or GPS (having a couple of club members using different ones walk together) and walk the route.

You have approximately 10 km for your walk route distance because you have roughed it out using a method such as a mapping software. Now is the time to WALK the route just to be sure that your distance is correct. Now is the time for a wheel/GPS. As you walk with the wheel/GPS, you may make notes as to where each kilometer is completed. This is a good time to write your route instructions because you may note where restrooms or other convenience facilities are located. You can note on the directions where any scenic or historical points are located and decide where to place your checkpoints or make any necessary adjustments to the route. Phone recording or other methods are useful here.

## Rating the Event

The event brochure including the AVA electronic event listing (Walking Events – Event Details) must identify a trail/route rating for all events except swimming, boating and skating events. In addition, any route obstacles or special conditions must be explained to describe the level of difficulty of the event. Participants need to know about major elevation gains, heavy traffic, narrow road shoulders, construction detours, roaming dogs, cattle guards, and the like along the route.

Although any rating system is somewhat subjective, the two-part numerical/alpha rating system will give event organizers a reliable planning tool. Thus, participants will have an idea about what to expect along a route whether it is for walking, biking, cross-country skiing, or snowshoeing.

Also, a trail/route rating system is a safety issue since an improperly/underrated event could have serious consequences for someone who is not physically prepared for more strenuous route conditions.

The sponsoring club needs to decide on an event rating based on the scale given below. All elevations over 3500 feet must be included in the written description of an event and be given a revision for elevation by one number (ie: The incline is a 2B but due to the starting elevation it would become a 3B)

	Part 1 – INCLINE/ELEVATION		Part 2 - TERRAIN
1	Very small hills or very little stair climbing.	A	Almost entirely on pavement.
2	Some moderate hills or stair climbing.	B	A significant part of the route is on well-groomed trails with very few obstacles.
3	Some significant hill or stair climbing.	C	A significant part of the route is on somewhat difficult terrain (rocky/rooted paths or soft sand.)
4	Lots of significant hills or stair climbing.	D	A significant part of the route is on very difficult terrain.
5	Many steep hills.	E	The majority of the route is on very difficult terrain.

### Examples

A route that is mostly on flat pavement would be rated 1A.

A beach walk would be rated 1C.

A route with moderate hills on well groomed trails would be rated 2B.

## Obtain Permits

You will need to inquire for where you will have your walk's start/finish and route(s) (namely cities, municipalities, homeowners' associations, and landowners) may require permits. Some may require permission to mark the route and will have route marking restrictions. Others may open up without any extra permission.

Some places may require a deposit or even charge a fee for use of the town or facility that will function as your start/finish. For example, you may be using a community center as your start/finish, but you will be walking out in the town. Rather than just go and mark the route, it is a good idea to approach the town authorities with a copy of the route map and the directions so they can let their emergency people (police, etc.) know what is happening. Approach the authorities verbally first. The upside to this is that the local merchants may offer discounts or special deals to volkssporters. Another positive effect is that it increases the club's visibility with city officials who agree with our efforts, and who will talk about it with others. Of course, the downside to this is that they can say "no" immediately, thus ending any further discussion.

Ask if there are any special requirements. Ask if there is a requirement to apply in writing. If you must apply in writing, it is recommended that the request include the following:

- Date and times of the event
- Start/finish location.
- Type of route marking being used.
- The number of people expected.
- A copy of the route map and directions
- Club and point of contact information.

In turn, they may ask you for a copy of the AVA insurance statement. If they ask for a copy of the insurance statement, you may be able to simply copy the general insurance statement. If they ask to be named on the insurance policy, then the club must apply through AVA for this coverage (explained in [my.ava.org](http://my.ava.org)). Be sure to let the authorities know that your participants sign a waiver (you may want to supply them a copy of the start card with its waiver) for their general information. If your event is in an area where there are stores (convenience), restaurants, and hotel/motels, let them know that your participants will be spending money in their town. You may even consider approaching the local Chamber of Commerce so that the local merchants will be aware of your presence and do promotion for your event.

Any AVA sanctioned event being co-sponsored with either a "for-profit" organization or "non-profit" organization must not conflict with AVA policies.

## **Prepare an Event Budget**

The majority of event budget preparation belongs to the Event Coordinator. The reason it is included here is that the Trailmaster must know how much equipment and supplies will be needed and determine if any purchases need to be made in advance after checking the club inventory.

1. Arrows
2. Route marking ribbon
3. Clothespins
4. Water- Jug or individual water bottles
5. Duct tape
6. Zip ties/garden ties
7. Trash bags
8. Signs noting "start point" or other similar signs.
9. Dog water bowl
10. Plastic bags to put the instructions in if you are expecting rain.
11. Tables and chairs for the start point.
12. Portable cover (tents) if the start/finish will be in the open air.
13. Slap tacker and/or stapler and extra staples
14. Other miscellaneous start/finish/ check point equipment such as rubber bands and string/cord/rope.
15. Start Cards or Waiver Forms.

## Creating Written Directions for Hosted Events and YR/SYR Events

Prepare instructions in a two-column format so the sheet can be folded in half lengthwise. This can be considered a safety factor, because as we try to walk and read at the same time, it's easier to keep a thumb on the line you're reading. Thus, you don't have to track across the entire sheet of paper.

Requirements for your directions:

- 1) Title of the event, distance and trail rating.
- 2) Address of Start Point (in case the walker needs to return early or gets lost)
- 3) All walk directions must include a copyright © and the year including the name of your club.
- 4) The intellectual property statement is required on both walk directions and maps:

These walk directions and maps may only be used in conjunction with a signed American Volkssport Association athletic waiver. All other uses are prohibited.

- 5) Emergency Notifications need to be included on all walk directions: (Optional graphic on AVA website.



In case of emergency dial: 911  
POC: Jeff Smith (205)423-8900

- 6) Thank your walkers for coming to your event. Satisfied customers return.
- 7) If it is a YRE or Seasonal, ask your participants to thank the business start point for letting the club have their event there. This helps improve relations with the local businesspeople.
- 8) The instructions need to be numbered – one number, one turn. (For some, it helps keep track of where they are on the sheet.)
- 9) Sometimes, if it isn't a "clean" left or right turn, a bit of explanation should be included in the same number, especially if you feel that more information is required to guide the walkers. It is confusing to see something like "Turn right on State St. Turn left on Johnson Ave, Cross Johnson and turn right on Avenue A." It is difficult to follow multiple directions in one step. Each step should have only one instruction. The simpler the better.
- 10) A better example of the above would be:
  - 1) **RIGHT** on State St
  - 2) **LEFT** on Johnson Ave
  - 3) **RIGHT** on Avenue A
- 11) Do NOT use east, west, north or south. If the sun is not out, it is too difficult to know where north is – unless you are from the area.
- 12) It is helpful to add the km indicator a few places in the walk directions so the walker can know how far they are along the route.
- 13) When you have a historical route with many points of interest, it is better to use a separate sheet for information.

## Checklist for AVA Guidelines for Route Directions

Purpose: The guidelines are intended to assist the Trailmaster to provide clear, accurate, consistent and easy-to-use route directions for sanctioned events.

General format standards:

- ☐ Keep the written directions short. The directions for a 10 km event route should usually be on one sheet of paper with written directions on one side and a map on the other side. Directions and map for a 5 km route should usually be on one side of a single sheet of paper. Often both 10 km and 5 km routes can be described for a single event on a single sheet of paper with a map on the back.
- ☐ Prepare in two-column format so sheet can be folded in half lengthwise. This allows the participant to fold the directions further for convenience of holding them, preventing them from flopping about due to air currents, and presenting the direction steps in a way that is easily readable while walking.

Written directions standards:

The Heading should contain the following:

- ☐ Name of event, stamp #, length(s) of route(s), and trail rating(s) for the route(s)
- ☐ Address of Start Point (in case the walker needs to return early or gets lost)
- ☐ Name of sponsoring club followed by a copyright indication (e.g., ©2022)
- ☐ For questions about or problems with the route or directions, include the name and phone number (preferably mobile) of the point of contact.
- ☐ Add "Medical Emergencies: Call 911" or other emergency contact information as appropriate for the area of the event.
- ☐ It is helpful to indicate where restrooms are along the route. (i.e., Restroom at start and in Central Park 5K.
- ☐ The following statement must be on the walk directions and maps: "These directions and maps may only be used in conjunction with a signed American Volkssport Association athletic waiver. All other uses are prohibited."

The body of the directions should meet the following:

- ☐ Number each direction step. This helps the participant keep his/her place.
- ☐ For each turn, use bolded capital letters for the turn direction (**RIGHT, LEFT**).
- ☐ When it is not a full turn, modify the turn direction to better describe the turn (**SLANT RIGHT, ANGLE LEFT, JOG RIGHT**). Sometimes it is helpful to avoid confusion by indicating the route continues **STRAIGHT** at a specific point. Do not use TL,TR.
- ☐ Keep each direction step simple by describing a single directive (e.g., "RIGHT on Johnson St"; "RIGHT on Johnson St to 3rd Ave"; "RIGHT on Johnson St for 5 blocks"). Many steps in a long sentence or a paragraph make it difficult to follow the directions.
- ☐ If a street changes names along the route, indicate this in the directions.

## Checklist for AVA Guidelines for Route Directions (Cont)

- ☐ Identify a landmark when it is necessary to ensure a direction step is followed. For trails in a forested or other natural area, landmarks may be very important for a walker to recognize a turn at the correct trail intersection.
- ☐ As a rule, describe architectural, natural or historical sites along the route on a separate “Points of Interest” sheet. Give each point of interest a number or letter designation. Reference each of those points at the appropriate place in the directions and perhaps on the map. In the event directions, you may occasionally wish to bring the participant’s attention to an important natural or historical landmark. Do so only if you can keep it very brief (“Note Empire State Building on your left.”), and if you have enough space so the directions and map fit on a single sheet using front & back.
- ☐ Optional: Thank the participants for coming to your event if you have room at the end. Encourage them to thank a representative of the business or organization that has agreed to host your start point.

Walk Directions example on following page.





## Daffodil Valley Volkssport Association

### Buckley Town 10K Walk YRE 0963 Rated 1A



**Start Point: Buckley Post Office, 215 So. River Rd, Buckley, WA**  
**Restrooms Shown on Map**

1. Facing the Post Office, walk down the steps on the right side of the Post Office to the Foothills trail.
2. **RIGHT** on the trail to unmarked Main St.
3. **LEFT** at Main St., use crosswalk and light to cross Hwy 410 and continue straight to 3<sup>rd</sup> St.
4. **LEFT** at 3<sup>rd</sup> St. to Mason Ave.
5. **RIGHT** at Mason Ave to Naches St.
6. **RIGHT** at Naches St. To Dundass Ave. (1K)
7. **RIGHT** at Dundass Ave. to Cascade St.
8. **LEFT** at Cascade St. to 4<sup>th</sup> Ave.
9. **RIGHT** at 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. to Norma St.
10. **LEFT** at Norma St. (Meadow Mountain Circle sign)
11. **LEFT** at Mountain Circle (street circles)
12. **LEFT** at unmarked Norma St. to Park Av.
13. **LEFT** at Park Ave to stop light at HWY 410.
14. **CROSS** Hwy 410 using crosswalk and light to the black asphalt trail on left.
15. **LEFT** on the trail, passing a mortuary, National Guard Armory and the cemetery. (Port-potty on left just past the cemetery maintenance bldg.)
16. **RIGHT** at Cemetery Maintenance Bldg to Dieringer Ave.
17. **STRAIGHT** at Dieringer Ave. (Copper Wynd development) to Trullinger St.
18. **RIGHT** at Trullinger St. to Whitehouse Ave.
19. **LEFT** at Whitehouse Ave. to Hackmann Ave.
20. **LEFT** at Hackmann Ave. to Olsen Ave.
21. **RIGHT** at Olsen Ave. to Sorensen St.
22. **RIGHT** at Sorensen St. to Dieringer Ave.
23. **RIGHT** at Dieringer Ave. to Boyle St.
24. **LEFT** at Boyle Ave. to Whitehouse Ave.
25. **LEFT** at Whitehouse Ave. to a walkway (across from Sorensen St.)
26. **RIGHT** at walkway, around fence to Elk Ridge Elementary School, through school grounds to an opening in the fence to unmarked Heather Lane.
27. **LEFT** at unmarked Heather Lane to Whitmore Way. (5K)
28. **LEFT** at Whitmore Way to Sergeant St.
29. **RIGHT** at Sergeant St. to Collins Rd.
30. **RIGHT** at Collins Rd (stay straight at left curve) to Rainier St.
31. **LEFT** at Rainier St. to Mason Ave.
32. **RIGHT** at Mason Ave. to S. B St.
33. **RIGHT** at S. B St. to E. Main St.
34. **LEFT** at E. Main St. to Cedar St.
35. **LEFT** at Cedar St. to Jefferson St.
36. **LEFT** at Jefferson St. to A St. (7K)
37. **RIGHT** at A St. (A St. jogs right to Spiketon Rd.)
38. **LEFT** at Spiketon Rd. to Ryan Rd.
39. **RIGHT** at Ryan Rd. to Hwy 165.
40. **CROSS** Hwy 165 at crosswalk and light.
41. **RIGHT** at next street. **RIGHT AGAIN** just before the stop light through yellow posts to enter the trail and return to the finish at the post office.

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These walk directions and maps may only be used in conjunction with a signed American Volkssport Association athletic waiver. All other uses are prohibited.

**In case of Emergency: CALL 911**

**POC:** My favorite POC  
[anybodyhome@gmail.com](mailto:anybodyhome@gmail.com)  
206-000-1234



## Maps and Map Making

### Map Sources

#### Web and App based on-line mapping:

- The most popular on-line mapping tool currently (2022) is plotaroute.com. You can create a free account, or your club could purchase a larger account capacity. Good tutorials and different map views to help you with trails, elevation etc.
- MapMyWalk is good app to download to your phone to create a route and walk it. Others are available to you. Do your research as the market is changing rapidly.
- GPS. It is now possible to use Garmin, TomTom, Magellan and other vehicle GPS systems to simply walk the route, plug the GPS unit into your computer, and print out a map of the route you just walked.
- Commercial Software for purchase. For cities and towns, several commercial programs are available for purchase. They have the advantage of being designed for people to use the maps and thus make them very easy to use. The disadvantages are that they cost money and are easily outdated for towns that are growing and adding a lot of streets. The market is changing rapidly. Microsoft Streets and Trails, Delorme Street Atlas are no longer available for purchase. If you have an old version, it is fine to use. You may want to research others that are available.
- AAA Maps. If you are a member of AAA, you can get free city maps of most large towns. These maps should have enough detail to use for a walk route. For most s smaller towns, AAA maps do not have enough detail to be of use.
- Maps from Government Sources. Many cities have maps of their town that you can get for free or a small fee. City, County, State, and National Parks/forests also have maps showing the location of trails and roads. In many cases, these are the best maps you can get for a walk, especially if the entire walk is in the park.
- Commercially printed maps. Commercially printed maps can be purchased at many places, including gas stations and retail stores – especially outdoor stores like REI. These normally have a fee and can only be used one time for a map.
- Yahoo, Google, and MapQuest all have maps that can be downloaded and used for route maps. They are free and are updated regularly. It may be necessary to hand draw arrows and important features on these, but they are a good source, and many Volkssport maps are made using them. All three are about the same in ease of use. It is an individual choice usually based on familiarity. Maps produced using a mile scale rather than a KM scale. Sometimes it takes a bit of work to get them dark enough to copy.

## Map Standards Checklist

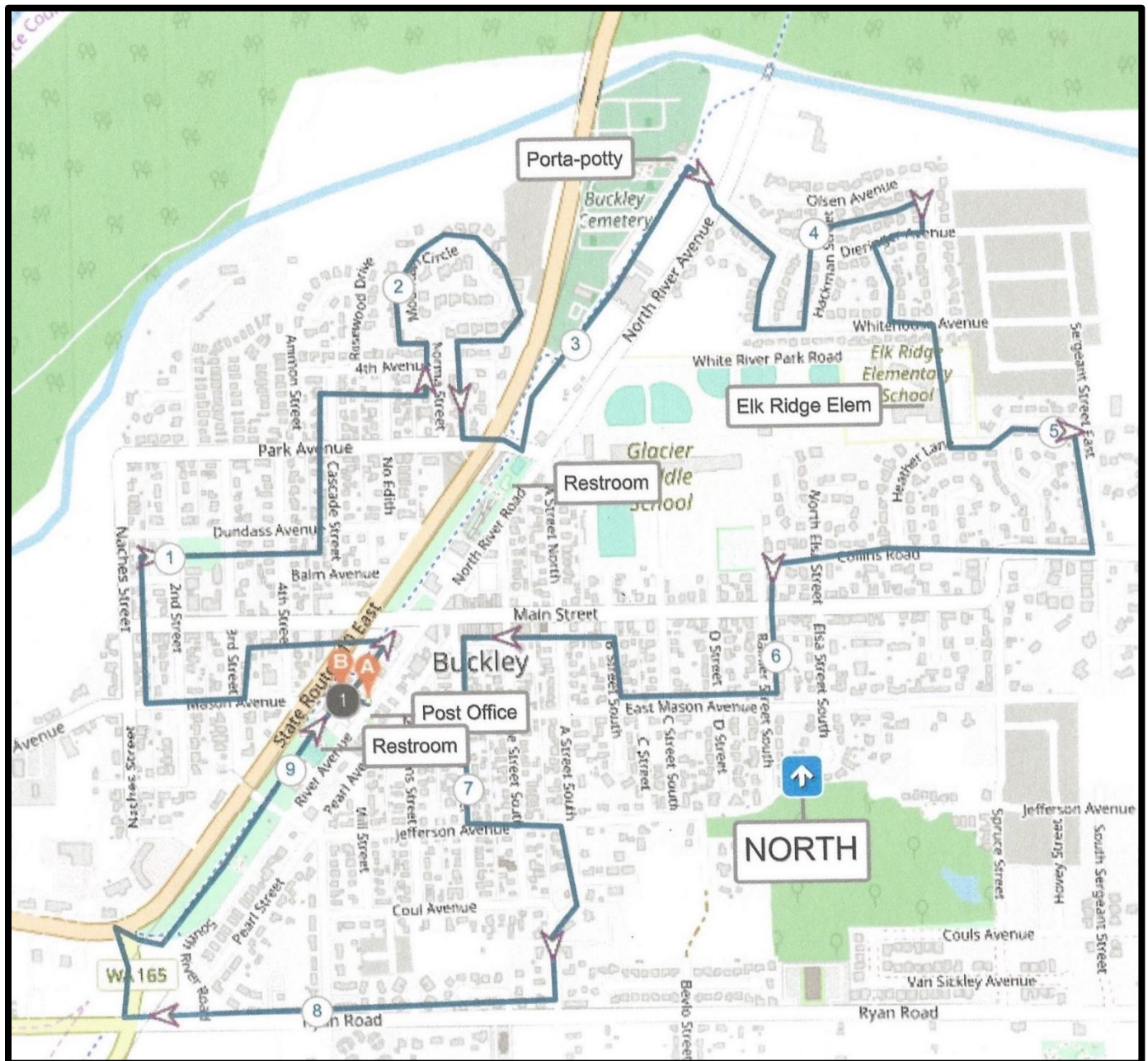
- ☐ Plan on a full side of a sheet of paper for a 10 km route map and a half (or a little less) of a side for a 5 km route map.
- ☐ Most maps produced from commercial software are oriented with north being at the top of the page. Nonetheless, it is helpful to assure participants of the map's orientation by typing "North" at the top of the page or drawing a north directional arrow on the page. If the map is oriented differently than north at the top of the page, be sure to indicate the direction of north on the map.
- ☐ Ensure that the names of sufficient streets are shown on the map to help the participants keep track of where they are. Include at least one street name outside the route boundary in case a participant misses a turn.
- ☐ Try to make the map to scale if you must hand draw it.
- ☐ Show the location of the Start/Finish.
- ☐ Points of interest can be shown on the map as well as the location of checkpoints, restrooms, drinking water, challenges met.
- ☐ Use arrows along the route to indicate the route direction.
- ☐ Make sure the map lines are dark enough to make good copies.

Example for a map on following page.

## Buckley Town Walk 10K YR963

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These walk directions and maps may only be used in conjunction with a signed American Volkssport Association athletic waiver. All other uses are prohibited.



Created from Microsoft "Streets and Trails" Software

## **Marking the Route**

AVA requires that you mark your traditional walk routes, if possible, as many communities and parks do not allow for marking.

There are many ways to accomplish this. This module offers proven ways to mark routes from across the country; hopefully, you will use one or more of these ways, so participants have a consistent experience from walk to walk. Some trail marking materials are available through AVA and may be ordered to get them to you in a timely manner; other materials may be purchased from hardware stores, home improvement centers, and building supply stores.

Your participants are your customers and giving them a pleasurable experience is important.

**See Appendix A for detailed marking suggestions.**

## **Conduct the Workers Walk**

The first workers walk should be when you have completed a rough draft of your walking route and map. Invite club members to walk with you. Have a member that has not walked the route before reading the directions and lead the walkers.

All walkers on the workers walk should register via the waiver before walking. It is also a good way to keep track of total distances for walkers on the event day.

A second workers walk can be done is when marking the trail. Usually, this is done a day or two before the event. The Worker's Walk is meant to allow your workers who will be working on the day(s) of the event to complete the event. This will also give checkpoint workers a better idea of how far along the walkers will be when they reach the checkpoint. It will give the start/finish workers an idea of what to watch out for when they send the people out on the event. Those who help with the Workers Walk can have their books stamped on the day of the event(s). As many workers as possible should participate in the workers walk.

You have already determined what trail marking equipment you will need. At the Workers Walk, assign people to carry trail marking tape, clothespins, hammers, staplers, extra staples, arrows, stakes, whatever equipment you have decided to use. You will supervise the placement of arrows and ribbon. Remember to give your customers comfort ribbons and arrows. Sometimes, on a long straight stretch, it is good to have additional arrows showing that the route is straight ahead. Arrows should be placed (at a minimum) at every turn.

Best practices indicates that it is best to place way finding and checkpoint signs out on the day of the event. If you place the checkpoint signs when you do the Workers Walk, the signs may disappear before the event.

The Workers Walk also encompasses stripping the trail. Those who strip your trail for you are also your event workers. They are just doing something else, and they do the event, just as your trail markers did. You should supply your trail strippers with plastic bags for the trail ribbon and arrows. You should supply some type of equipment to remove staples that have been attached. All of this equipment will be returned to you when they complete their tasks.

## **Year Round/Seasonal Walks (YR/SYR)**

### **Selecting the Route**

(Much of YRE/SE route selection is the same as for route selection for traditional events. The important parts as they apply to Year-Round Events are repeated here.)

The first part of this is deciding what you want your customers (participants) to see. Do you want them to see an urban park, a particular building, something scenic, something historical?

Now that you have decided on what to see, the next most important consideration is safety. Will your customers have to walk on narrow road shoulders? Are there adequate cross walks? If your event is in a forested area, will the route be over paths that are very narrow and confusing? Your route should be as safe as you can possibly make it. If you have a doubt, it is probably unsafe and should be either re-routed or discarded.

Customer comfort is the next consideration. Are there restrooms along the route? Are there restrooms at the start/finish? If the route is in a city, will there be places to stop and get something to drink? If the route is in a forested area, should your customers carry their own water?

## **Selection of the YRE Start/Finish for Physical Start Boxes**

The business must be willing to let you put a walk box in their establishment where it is accessible.

The business should have good hours, preferably open weekends. The hours affect participation. Since walkers prefer early morning during hot weather, a start that opens close to dawn is better than one that doesn't open until later in the day.

Suggestions include hotels, grocery stores, coffee shops.

The days the start is open also may affect participation. If the start is closed on Sunday and/or another day during the week, that means walkers who choose those days can't do your walk.

There should be restrooms available that walkers may use. (Some stores have restrooms for employees only.)

There should be sufficient parking available in the surrounding area so that the YRE participants do not interfere with the customers at your start point.

There should be adequate space for your walkers to register without getting in the way of people operating the business.

Never promise to bring in customers to the business that will let you put a walk box there. There are never any guarantees.

Recognize the business for their willingness to help on your behalf. An AVA Certificate of Appreciation goes a long way in showing thanks to the business.

Never ask the business to be responsible for what happens with your walk box.

Be sure to service the walk box often and keep it supplied with all that is needed.

## **Permits**

Seldom are permits required to walk on city streets. However, if your walk goes through any non-public property, you will need permission, and perhaps a permit, so inquire about what is required. State parks may require some type of permission to walk there. If you have any doubts, inquire. It is safer to get the permit than to have your event closed because you didn't get a permit.

## **Event Budget**

If your club is considering a Year-Round Event, you must supply the club with an estimate of the equipment required to host the event. Examples of equipment required are a 2-drawer file cabinet that has a locking drawer, plastic file folder case, printed registration pages, a 3-ring binder to hold the registration pages as well as holding event maps/directions and mailing envelopes. If too much equipment is required, the club must decide whether it is feasible to host an event in that location.

## **Year-Round Event Walk Directions/Maps**

Please use the "How To" contained in the information about traditional events be the guide and standard for YRE maps/instructions. There are special instructions concerning YREs/SEs contained in the traditional event standards. All elevations over 3500 feet must be included in written description of an event.



# APPENDIX A

## TRAIL MARKING

## APPENDIX A

### Trail marking detail:

Organize your trail marking materials in advance. Count right turns, left turns, and turn arounds in directions. Assemble the number needed, plus some extras of each turn, in a bag and label it. Also have a bag containing “k” markers (“k” markers are signs usually placed on wooden stakes that let the participant know how far they have traveled) and one of extra marking supplies.

Placement of arrows and ribbons. If you want your participants to cross the street before turning, place the turn arrow on the corner where you want them to turn. The same is true if you want them to turn right or left before crossing the intersection, place the arrow on the near side. It’s always helpful to put a ribbon or two after the turn to reassure the walker that they made the correct turn. Arrows usually should be placed at 5 feet to 6 feet high so the walker can see them more easily. If this is not possible (perhaps the town won’t let you mark posts/poles), then put the arrow where it is most likely to be seen.

There are a number of ways to mark a route. With cities/municipalities being ever more particular, you should check with them to determine what is acceptable. For example, some towns absolutely do not permit the use of staples in power poles, and some forbid marking traffic signs such as Stop Signs.

### Trail Marking Equipment:



Various equipment can be used to secure arrows depending on surface:

- Zip Ties
- Staples
- Clear Stretch Wrap Roll
- Duct Tape
- Stakes, wooden, plastic or other material.

## Trail Marking Detail (Cont)

Trail marking ribbon/tape is another method of flagging your walk route. It is recommended that ribbon/tape not be the only method of marking a route. It should be used in conjunction with arrows and written maps/directions. Ribbon/tape only as a means of marking the route doesn't allow you to mark turns easily. It should be used mostly on straight stretches and just after a turn. If ribbon/tape is used, there are two ways to put ribbon/tape on your route. The first is just tying it to some object (usually a tree branch, pole, or fence). This is a good and inexpensive way to mark the route. It also gives your participants comfort to know that they are still on the right route and not lost. Another way to use ribbon/tape is to use clothespins with the ribbon/tape. Take a piece of ribbon/tape and pull it down into the mouth of the clothespin. Then, when you place it, you need only to attach it to a tree branch like you would attach the clothespin to a clothesline. Removal is simple and they can be reused. If the ribbon/tape is long enough, you can wrap it around a post/pole and use the clothespin to attach it by opening up to clip to the ribbon itself.

Helpful hint: Ribbon should be placed on left side of the highway or road because that is where you want your walkers to walk – facing traffic, or on the right side along a trail or sidewalk. However, if for some other reason, you want them to be on the right side, then place the ribbons on the right. Two ribbons should be placed together to indicate that they are approaching a turn.

Helpful hint: If marking a route with ribbon, it is wise to avoid using colors that blend in with its surroundings. For example, orange, yellow, or green ribbon could blend with leaves, especially in autumn. Be sure that your ribbon stands out in any season.



Trail marking ribbon attached to clothespins. Trail marking ribbon comes in a variety of colors and may be ordered from AVA HQ or purchased where engineer tape is sold. Be sure the color(s) you choose aren't used by others already.

## Trail Marking Detail (Cont)

Chalk is another useful tool in marking a route. A major disadvantage to chalk is that if you are expecting rain or other inclement weather, the chalk will wash away easily. Another disadvantage is that it cannot be seen from very far away.



Chalk arrow showing a right turn. Note that the head of the arrow looks like two “V”s. Thus, the chalk arrow looks like IVV.



Again, note that the head of the arrow looks like two “V”s showing an arrow that looks like IVV.

Mark the route shortly before the walk. The less time the markings are up the less likely someone (playful kids) will take them down.

During the event, if the number of volunteers permits, have some walk or run the route periodically to check for problems— reattaching or replacing markers that fell, blew, or were taken down; touching up those in need; adding markers where walkers report problems.

Strip the trail as soon as possible after the walk is finished. Your sweeper may go out after the final walkers start as long as they don’t pass the remaining walkers who depend on the markers.

## APPENDIX B

### TRAILMASTER CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

## **Trailmaster Examination**

### **Discussion Items**

#### Traditional Event

##### Route Selection

- After deciding where to walk, what should be the most important part of the event?
- How should I treat my participants?

##### Selecting the Start/Finish Area

- What are the things I should consider as I select the Start/Finish?
- As you set up the Start/Finish, what is most important in deciding where to position it?

#### The Checkpoint

- Why do we have checkpoints?
- What kind of equipment will I need at the checkpoint?
- What should checkpoint personnel do while they are on duty?

#### Measuring the Route

- What is the best way to measure a route? Why?
- What alternative methods can be used to measure the route?
- What are the pros and cons of the alternate methods?

#### Ordering trail marking supplies

- How can I order trail marking supplies from AVA?

#### Obtain Permits

- Why should I get permission? A permit?
- Are permit always required?

#### Prepare an Event Budget

- Why is this part of Trailmaster Training?
- What considerations should there be in preparing the budget?

## **Discussion Items (cont)**

### **Directions**

- When writing directions, what kind of things should I do?
- What should be put in the directions?
- What should not be put in the directions?
- How can I include points of interest in the directions?

### **Maps and Map Making**

- What are the best sources of walk maps?
- What are the things to consider when planning a map?
- What are the things to consider when actually making the map?
- What are the things to consider when making copies of the map?

### **Marking the Route**

- Why do we mark our routes?
- What are the ways to mark a route?
- What are the 3 ways to get your customers through your walk?

### **Conduct the Workers Walk**

- Who should be included in the Workers Walk and why?
- Why should signs not be placed the day before the event?
- What is another use of the Workers Walk?

### **The AVA Policy Manual and Event Documents**

- Where can I find copies of the Policy Manual and Event Documents?

## **Discussion Items (cont.)**

### Year Round/Seasonal Walks

- Selecting the Route
- What differences are there between selecting the route for a traditional route and a YRE?
- What are the similarities between selecting the route for a traditional route and a YRE?

### Selection of the YRE Start/Finish

- What should I consider in choosing a YRE Start/Finish?
- What should I never do in choosing a YRE Start/Finish?

### Event Budget

### Year-Round Event Map/Instructions.



## **Trailmaster Examination for certification**

1. Design a walk route.  
Using the seven principles, discuss with your Regional Director how and why you selected this route.  
(For RD – Pass/Fail)
2. Selecting the Start/Finish.  
Using the six principles, discuss with your Regional Director how and why you decided on this location for the Start/Finish  
(For RD – Pass/Fail)
3. Selecting the Checkpoint(s).  
Using the material contained in this Trailmaster Guide and Trailmaster Certification, discuss with your Regional Director why you selected this particular location as the checkpoint.  
(For RD – Pass/Fail)
4. Measuring the Route.  
Explain to your Regional Director how you measured the route and why you chose that method.  
(For RD – Pass/Fail)
5. Mark the Route.  
As you walk the route with your Regional Director, explain how you marked the route and why you chose those methods.  
(For RD – 25 points. Add 5 points if something new, creative, and desirable is used. Subtract points if route is not marked well)
6. Strip the trail.  
(For RD – 25 points. Subtract points if paint is removed where duct tape is used. Subtract points if trail markers are missed. Subtract points if staples are not removed)
7. Directions.  
Prepare columnar directions and have your Regional Director critique them as you walk the route. (Done at the same time as #5)  
(For RD – 25 points. Subtract points for differences between the directions and the actual route)
8. Prepare a map for the route and have your Regional Director critique it as you walk the route. (Done at the same time as #5)  
(For RD – 25 points. subtract points for differences between the directions, the map, and the actual route)

90 points required for certification.

**Notes:**

