**Starting Your Own Club**

Are you passionate about a particular sport, cultural activity or past time?

Would you like to be able to share this passion with others or have an opportunity to meet new people who have a similar interest?

One of the important principles of the Canadian Armed Forces Recreation Program is that an individual should not only be allowed to choose his/her leisure activities, but also should be afforded the opportunity to participate in the planning, organization and operation of these activities.

If you would like that opportunity, PSP Community Recreation Departments across Canada can assist you in developing a Recreation Club.

Your first step is to contact your local PSP Manager Community Recreation, to arrange a meeting to discuss the creation of a new club or activity.

To prepare for this meeting it’s important that you arrive with more information than just “I want to start a Mountain Trekking Club” Taking a leadership role means that you will have done some homework and will be able to discuss the activity in full, so that the PSP Community Recreation Department can better assist you.

As potential club organizer smart planning and preparation will get you closer to the participation.

Check your local military community to see what activities are currently offered to ensure there are no similar clubs already existing by logging onto [www.cafconnection.ca](http://www.cafconnection.ca)

When proposing a name for your club name make sure it reflects the activity.

**TIP:** Review other Bases and Wings websites at [www.cafconnection.ca](http://www.cafconnection.ca) to see if they offer a similar activity, contact their club president for advice and copies of the club’s constitution and by-laws.

**TIP:** Review the Club Resources section at: <https://www.cafconnection.ca/National/Programs-Services/Recreation/Club-Resources.aspx> to see what documents are required, and the templates available.

Sometimes times names such as “The Adventurers” does not mean anything to other participants, is this a hiking club or a kite flying group?

**TIP:** Marketing your activity will be very important; the PSP Recreation Department can help you get the word out!

Define what activities will be included and/or delivered within your club:

1. Is your club going to operate as a casual activity, where people can come and do their own thing?
2. Is your club going to give instructional classes, teaching participants a new or advanced skill?
3. Is your club going to be a part of a bigger organization, such as a sports league or provincial association?
4. Will your club require staffing, or can it be organized by volunteers?
5. Will there be a cost to participate?

**TIP:** Your idea for a club may run best as a program organized by the PSP Community Recreation Department, this means that all the administrative work is done by the Recreation Department and there could be a chance to be paid as a qualified instructor or activity leader.

**TIP:** Review PSP Policy Manual Chapter 6-1 (Recreation), 6-2 (Recreation Clubs) prior to your meeting with the PSP Community Recreation Staff.

Define who the activities will be conducted for:

1. Is your club going to be open for children, youth and adults to participate? Or only certain age groups?
2. Did you know that Recreation Club membership is determined by CAF policy and ratios are in place to ensure that military personnel and their family have priority?
3. Have a general interest meeting to see if there is a population of who wish to participate.

**TIP:** Did you know that HIGH FIVE is the national frame work for recreation policy, evaluation and program development, learn more at [www.highfive.org](http://www.highfive.org) Define where your activity will take place?

Define where your activity will take place:

1. Is there a facility on Base were you can conduct your activity?
2. Do you need a special facility or will a multipurpose room be sufficient?
3. How often will would you like to meet with your group?
4. Is this activity available all year long or is the activity seasonal?
5. Will the activity go off site or travel?
6. Include the type of equipment resources needed to operate your club

**TIP:** Fund support and the allocation of facilities and space should be given to the clubs with the highest percentage of military personnel and their family.

Think about safety and accident prevention. Often when a new club activity is brought forward to a Recreation Director there are concerns how risks will be managed. If the risks are high, activities may be turned down; doing research in advance will help address concerns.

1. Contact local and provincial sports/recreational organizations for safety and risk management guidelines.
2. Review if there are any provincial or national legislation that govern the activity.
3. Find out the proper qualifications or certifications required to participate or instruct the activity.
4. Make a list of possible risks and the possible solutions to address them

Starting a recreation club in your community may seem like a daunting task. The

process is a complex one and needs to be carefully planned if the club is to succeed in

the long term. PSP Community Recreation Departments are there to assist you. They will help you prepare budgets and finances, manage volunteers and staff, book space and guide you through policy and procedure.

**Together you can work towards developing a viable club that will serve the needs of your community in the years to come.**