

Alonzo Stagg 50/20 Hike – Tail-End Charlie Operations (2024 Update)

It is recommended that all Tail-End Charlies read the “Hike Guide” AND the “Trail Rules and Emergency Procedures Sheet” before reading this Instructional Guide, then read this Guide.

The Hike employs Tail-End Charlies (TECs) as “safety sweeps” for each hike; i.e., for the 10-, 20-, 25-, and 50-mile routes. The TECs are a pair of adults who are the last hikers on their respective route (i.e., a separate pair for each Hike), and are responsible for ensuring that every hiker on their designated hike either completes the hike or is picked up in accordance with the Emergency Procedures. TECs should carry **Directions, charged cell phones, the POC List, and the Trail Rules and Emergency Procedures Guide**. All TECs are requested to take photos of the various Support Stops while hiking, for use in future Hike Guides.

The TECs are always the last hikers to start from St. Agnes, either as a pair alone or with the last group of hikers leaving on that Hike. Each Hike has a different color ribbon that the hikers (including the TECs) are supposed to wear for their entire hike, in order to be readily identifiable to the TECs, Biker Escorts, and Support Stop Registrars (the colors will be established the day of the hike). All TECs need to be very mindful not to pass hikers that are off the route, for example in a Porta-John or a bathroom, and can expect to be hiking barely above the cutoff pace of 2.5 mph (patience needed). They should keep the next Support Stop Station Chief informed on where they are, especially if the Cutoff Time for that station is coming up (their numbers will be on the POC list).

If the TECs note that a hiker has become exhausted or is significantly lagging, they coordinate efforts to get the hiker and his buddy to the next Support Stop, or (failing that) to get the hiker’s parents to pick him up. In either case, **the TECs notify the hiker’s Unit leader, the Chief of the next Support Stop, and the Acting Hike Administrator that the hiker is dropping out.** If needed, the TECs must stay with the buddy hiker until another suitable buddy group arrives (however, if the buddy pair were the last hikers on that stretch, as is almost certain unless they were in another hiker group, then both of them should be sent home). A buddy group that is a triple can continue on as a double, once the third hiker has been taken care of. The TECs must carry charged cell phones, and must check in upon arrival “as the Tail-End Charlies for the ___ Mile Hike” with the Station Chief at each Support Stop (if they are the last TECs of the day, their arrival enables the Stop to close down). TECs should also keep in touch with the Biker Escorts when they pass.

TECs should NOT burden themselves down with excessive support items such as extra food, water, and first aid gear – such items can be delivered fairly quickly by the Biker Escorts if needed. The main tasks are to keep the hikers moving along at a reasonable pace, and to handle injured, ill, or exhausted hikers that cannot make it to the next Support Stop.

TECs are considered to be staffers, and are not charged for their hikes. TECs are needed for:

- 10 Mile Hike (St. Agnes to St. Agnes) (2 Needed)
- 20 Mile Hike (St. Agnes to St. Agnes) (2 Needed)
- 25 Mile Hike (St. Agnes to Fletchers) (2 Needed) †

- 50 Mile Hike (St. Agnes to Bluemont) (2 Needed – Note that this job can be split (by 4 people) into St. Agnes to Fletchers or Key Bridge (28 miles) and Fletchers or Key Bridge to Bluemont (15 miles) †

† 25- and 50-mile TECs can be combined in some situations, see below option 2.

The 10- and 20-Mile TEC pairs assemble and hike with their respective hiking groups.

Options for the 25- and 50-Mile TECs ONLY:

1. The 25-Mile and 50-Mile TECs have the option of starting a full hour later in the morning, if they so wish AND they are fast; several other 50 Milers who are not TECs also have this privilege, granted so as to improve convergence of the 50 Milers up to Gravelly Point (these hikers have previously completed the entire 50 miles at about 4 mph paces). This late start or other approach should be confirmed with the Hike Administrator ahead of hike day.
2. A Pair can be the combined 25- and 50-Mile TECs provided the 25- and 50-Mile hikers are starting at the same time (which is generally the case). The 25/50-Mile TECs would hike straight through from St. Agnes to Bluemont where they would have the option of continuing the 50-mile hike or retiring at 40-miles and having the Bluemont station and support team take over. **When 25/50-mile TECs are hiking, they must stay behind all 25- and 50-mile hikers until Fletchers, when the 25-mile hikers end their day.**
3. **ONLY IF SEPARATE PAIRS OF 25- and 50-Mile TECs are supporting the Hike:** The 50 Miler TECs can expect to start passing 25 Mile Hikers during the return leg from Great Falls – this is acceptable, since the 25 Milers end at Fletchers. [Again, the 25 Milers will be wearing a different color ribbon than the 50 Milers, so they should be easy to differentiate – as long as they are actually wearing their ribbons!] If this happens, however, then the 25 Mile TECs are the final safety sweeps for the day, and need to notify the Fletchers Support Stop personnel (when they arrive) that they may close down. The 50 Miler TECs should also notify the Key Bridge Waypoint personnel (one at the Whitehurst Freeway Staircase, one at the G.W. Parkway, and the last at the Langston Blvd/Custis Trail Intersection), the Gravelly Point Support Stop Personnel, and the Shirlington Waypoint personnel, that they may close down their stations. Finally, the 50 Miler TECs should have something reflective to wear, and a light, in their support duffels for pickup at Gravelly Point, since they will very likely be completing the last stretch on the W&OD trail to Bluemont in the dark.

Photos of the various Support Stops should be provided to the Hike Administrator via email, at the TECs earliest convenience.

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