

SMC Deposit and Cancellation Policy

During registration, every Sierra Mountain Center (SMC) program participant must sign acknowledgement they have read and understand this Deposit and Cancellation Policy, which addresses how deposits are collected and how cancellations are handled. Deposits and cancellation policies are crucial for operating “tour-type” programs with high up-front costs and overhead. SMC operates well within industry standards and we try to be fair; however, many things are out of our control. As a small business hoping to continue booking future programs for guests all over the world, we must adhere to this Deposit and Cancellation policy, and hope for your understanding.

By their very nature, mountaineering and other backcountry adventures are uncertain endeavors. Many factors can influence the arrival to, the running of, or the outcome of a SMC program. **Therefore, SMC strongly suggests obtaining “cancel for any reason” travel insurance before embarking.** Weather, route conditions, or even your own abilities may create circumstances that make continuing a SMC program unsafe or unwise, and you and/or your party may have to exit early. Once an SMC program begins at meetup, no refunds are given. If a program ends early due to weather or route conditions, your guide will offer to spend your remaining time pursuing an alternative or more feasible – yet fun – hike, ski, climb, or summit.

Travel Insurance

Unless you are willing to absorb the entire cost of your program in the event of a cancellation or early exit, it is essential that you obtain travel insurance to protect your investment. SMC is not liable for cancellation fees or costs arising from your changed or canceled flights, rentals, lodging, or other arrangements (travel insurance can cover those costs). Travel insurance suggestions are listed at <https://sierramountaincenter.com/registration>. We recommend you call and speak with agent(s) before purchasing. SMC is not liable for lack of coverage of the policy you select.

“Rescue Insurance”

We do not provide or require *rescue* insurance. If interested, we suggest [Global Rescue](#) or membership in the [American Alpine Club](#).

Deposits

- **Booking 3 months or more out:** a 25% deposit secures your reservation
- **Booking 30 days or more out:** a 50% deposit secures your reservation
- **All balances are due once within 30 days of program start.** Failure to pay your balance within two weeks of program start date could result in forfeit of deposit and cancellation of your reservation.
- SMC accepts check by mail, and eChecks, Visa, Mastercard and Discover by phone and [online](#).

Guide-to-Participant Ratios

Scheduled programs are priced to run with a minimum number of participants. We keep guide-to-participant ratios low for our guests' comfort and enjoyment, but *too low* means we run in the red. If the minimum ratio is not met for your booked program, we will offer to either: continue with adjusted ([custom guiding](#)) pricing, adapt the program length or inclusions, or reschedule.

Cancellations

- **Office notified 4 weeks or more before scheduled date:**
 - **Cancellations:** SMC will retain a 25% cancellation fee from the amount due at the time of cancellation.
 - **Rescheduling** is possible at no charge, subject to date/permit/guide availability, and only within the same calendar year.
- **Office notified within 2-4 weeks before scheduled date:**
 - **Cancellations:** Your payment is non-refundable and non-transferable to another program.
 - **Rescheduling** is possible with a 15% fee added to the total trip price at the time of rescheduling, subject to date/permit/guide availability, and only within the same calendar year. If rescheduling is not possible, you can keep your original dates, or cancel with no refund.
- **Within 14 days scheduled date:** No rescheduling. Fees collected are non-refundable and non-transferable to another program.
- **For programs lasting longer than 10 days (e.g. JMT, High Sierra Hike) and all overseas trips:** same as above, but with 8 week, 4-8 week, and 4 week cutoffs instead.
- Any and all costs incurred in cancellations, such as USFS trail fees, will be paid for by the participant.

We rarely cancel a program outright. However, should SMC need to cancel due to hazardous weather, government orders, Acts of God etc., we will offer you the opportunity to change programs, reschedule, or refund without penalty. Refunds will be limited to monies paid directly to SMC and not ancillary expenses (including but not limited to hotels, airfares, vehicle rentals, equipment, medical, exchange rates, etc).