

## Role of Pacman, Tail End Charlie and other Adult/Leader Patrols on VenMX

Pacman is a “sweeper” patrol of adult leaders and rovers that comes up at the rear of the youth patrols on each day’s walk.

The term derives from the arcade game *Pac-Man* first released in Japan in 1980 and still immensely popular world-wide today. In the game, “*Pac-man*” proceeds through a maze eating “Pac-dots” as he finds them!

Tail End Charlie (TEC) is a further adult patrol (or patrols) that trail the youth patrols and consists of other adult walkers.

In some cases, a leader patrol will be “pre-placed” along the route, e.g. where there are particular concerns about patrols getting lost. This is known as a “Rapid response team” (RRT).

In the VenMX context, the Pacman/TEC/RRT team(s) perform(s) several important functions that include:

- Leaving CP1 each morning shortly after the last youth patrol and **pac**ing the **Venturer patrols** through the day to ensure that all patrols reach the next BIV before nightfall
- Providing leader **support for youth patrols that need care** (first aid, broken gear, other problems)
- Providing leader support for patrols where it becomes evident the patrol is **incapable of providing its own navigation or leadership**
- Provide **assistance with search and rescue** but ONLY if requested by the Hikemaster

The primary purpose of Pacman is NOT search and rescue. However, Pacman might be asked to “keep an eye out” for an overdue patrol as they traverse a leg.

It is more likely that the TEC will be asked to split off a *sub-patrol* to search in a limited area whilst Pacman and the rest of the TEC continues on to the next CP.

Where Pacman/TEC encounters a youth patrol that is immobile (e.g. is injured or sick), Pacman/TEC will stabilise the situation as required, and a sub-patrol from Pacman/TEC will be left with the youth patrol to facilitate communication with VenMX control and effect search and rescue operations, or assist with carrying gear of the sick/injured so the patrol can reach the next CP themselves, etc

*Except for very unusual circumstances, Pacman must continue to “sweep” the course keeping to the allocated Pacman times in the route instructions. This is to ensure that all patrols get into the BIV before dark.*

Where it becomes evident that the youth patrols will not be able to keep to the Pacman times in the route instructions, then Pacman will recommend to the Hikemaster that the Pacman times be delayed for the rest of the day, or some other adjustments made to the course. The Hikemaster will make any decision to adjust Pacman times or the route in conjunction with Pacman leader and the CP coordinator (CPC).

Specific issues for Pacman include:

- Pacman should leave about 5 minutes after the last Venturer patrol to leave CP1 on each day and “keep” to the nominated Pacman times in the route instructions
- If the last Venturer patrol to leave CP1 leaves later than the Pacman times in the route instructions, then the Hikemaster will decide whether all Pacman times for the day will be reset (delayed) or not. If they are to be delayed, he will advise the Pacman/TEC leader and CPC who will in turn advise the CPOs
- Pacman/TEC will NOT physically overtake any patrols during the day, i.e. they always remain at the rear.
  - Where Pacman/TEC encounters a patrol that is clearly progressing more slowly than Pacman times,

the patrol is REQUIRED to join Pacman. Pacman has some discretion to allow the patrol to continue as a competition patrol, providing it appears they are competent to do so and Pacman will not be significantly further delayed. The problem with this is that Pacman cannot afford to “follow” a patrol so that if the youth patrol is not going on the correct route or is simply too slow, it will be deemed to be incompetent in terms of navigation. If the patrol does not appear competent, then Pacman should escort the patrol into the next CP if necessary via forming a Pacman/TEC sub-patrol. *A penalty of 50 points will be made against competition patrols in this situation, i.e. who arrive at a CP accompanied by or under the supervision of Pacman/TEC*

- Where the patrol appears competent and is prepared to increase its pace, Pacman/TEC may decide to provide one of its leaders to accompany the patrol to the next CP. This does not penalise the patrol but the leader must NOT PROVIDE any support to the patrol if it is a competition patrol. The leader will only remain with the patrol until our “duty of care” has been discharged, e.g. until the patrol is safely at the next CP, or appears to be competent in navigation etc. The leader should not be the patrol’s VSL etc.
- Pacman/TEC may “inadvertently” overtake a youth patrol, e.g. arrive at a CP and find a youth patrol has still not reported in. In this case, the youth patrol will be considered to be “lost” and will become the responsibility of the Hikemaster. *The Pacman/TEC patrol will continue on to the next CP, although the Hikemaster may ask for a sub-patrol to remain at the CP to join in S&R operations.*
- If the youth patrol is deemed not competent to continue by themselves past the next CP, they will be “reverted” back to a non-competition patrol and provided with an adult leader.
- No sub-patrol from Pacman/TEC is to be less than two persons, although a two-person patrol may separate slightly providing they remain within direct voice contact of each other
- Pacman/TEC will start off each day with THREE SETS OF: maps, route instructions, special tasks, UHF radios, GPS, watches, these instructions
- Pacman/TEC will have a leader appointed by the Hikemaster. That leader should remain with Pacman/TEC until relieved by the Hikemaster. Any sub-patrols “spun off” from Pacman/TEC will have a leader appointed by the Pacman/TEC leader
- Pacman/TEC sub-patrols will not be spun off without at least a handheld radio and maps, but preferably also with GPS
- Any RRT will generally operate separately to Pacman/TEC under specific instructions from the Hikemaster (e.g. to patrol a certain area, or remain at a given location until a certain time etc)
- Where possible, each leader patrol will also have a GPS “tracker” carried with them to provide real-time monitoring of their location
- The Pacman/TEC leader will report to the Hikemaster
- Where the Pacman/TEC patrol becomes smaller (e.g. due to a leader being allocated for the rest of the day to a patrol), the Hikemaster will coordinate with the CPC coordinator to provide a replacement Pacman/TEC leader at the next suitable CP, where such a leader can be made available (e.g. by insertion)