

The Hiking Terrain Matrix

Risk Factor	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Time to additional resources at road or lodge	No more than 3 hrs.	Multiple days, but no more than 8 hrs.	No Limit.
Fall Exposure	Easily managed or avoidable.	Fall hazard exists but manageable with moderate consequence.	Short sections with unavoidable & serious consequence, but can be managed without a rope.
Technical Difficulty	Smooth & Easy. Sections of unstable footing are short & isolated.	Talus and loose footing, some rough sections, trails may be poorly maintained.	Use of hands may be required. May be sustained sections of unstable footing.
Fresh Water	Mid-calf deep for slow moving and ankle deep for fast moving with no downstream hazards.	Hip deep for slow moving and knee for fast moving with no downstream hazards.	Waist deep for slow moving and crotch deep for fast moving.
Tidal Water	Gently sloping and non-slippery intertidal zone. No rogue waves.	Surge channels and tidal entrapment easily avoided. Moderate wave hazard may exist. Moderately sloping. Some slipping hazard.	Surge channels, tidal entrapment and wave hazards may be present. Steeply sloping, rocky, and slippery intertidal zone.
Weather Exposure	Generally sheltered, or easy retreat to sheltered area.	May be exposed but can retreat to sheltered area within 45 minutes.	Exposed areas with difficult or no retreat.
Navigation	On trails, or untracked with natural boundaries and/or handrails, may require simple map.	Simple route choices. May require a map, compass and/or GPS.	Complicated navigation, difficult route finding with minimal landmarks, requires map and compass and/or GPS.