

## Guidelines for outdoor activities

### 1 Purpose

These guidelines are intended for outdoor activities such as bushwalking and skiing outings which are endorsed by the Club. They may cover short outings (for example cross-country skiing rambles) or multiday activities (for example weekend bushwalks). Their intent is to reduce the risk of conducting such activities – the risk both to leaders and to other participants – by providing “best practice” guidelines. These guidelines are not intended to cover activities primarily run by other organisations, such as Club races run using Perisher Blue resources.

The Club's outdoor activities are meant to be fun - outdoor experiences in a friendly Club environment. Members and other participants need to be aware, however, that the Club's outdoor activities are often in an alpine environment and mountains can be hazardous. Safety is a paramount consideration. All participants need to be properly equipped for inclement weather at any time of the year.

In some cases, guidelines may not be applicable to a particular activity, especially for short activities in the Canberra urban area. It is not expected that all guidelines will be followed for all activities, however they should always be considered. A checklist is provided, where reasons for deciding not to apply guidelines can be noted.

In all cases and for all activities, common sense should be applied. Guidelines cannot and are not expected to cover every situation.

### 2 Guidelines for leaders

#### 2.1 Preparation

- Leaders should have suitable experience appropriate for the intended activity.
- Leaders should prepare and plan the activity including identifying the proposed route and determining the degree of difficulty. This should include checking maps, first aid and emergency equipment, monitor the weather and any local restrictions. External restrictions must always be considered and obeyed, National Park closures or limits, and the like.
- Leaders should preferably have undertaken a reconnaissance (reccy) of the area beforehand. This is to verify that the intended route is suitable for the intended experience level, and that the intended route is familiar to the leader. In general, at least one assistant (who will be participating in the activity) should accompany the leader on the reccy. This may not be required if the activity is short or over well-known or well-marked terrain.
- Where appropriate, the leader should carry maps covering the intended route, and provide suitable map references to participants. This is generally not required for short trips in well-known or well-marked areas.
- Leaders should check the weather forecast periodically in days before the activity or walk. Arrangements should be made so that the activity can be cancelled or modified if weather indicates. The activity must be cancelled if a day of catastrophic fire danger

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has been declared. Leaders may also cancel the activity during total fire ban periods or if severe thunderstorms or heavy rain are forecast.

## 2.2 In case of emergencies.

- Leaders should carry a torch, waterproof matches, thermal blanket and a good first aid kit.
- A first aid kit should be carried for most activities; however, this may not be required where the activity will be remaining close to external help (e.g. short cross-country rambles around the inner marked Nordic trails). The first aid kit should contain equipment for likely injuries – for example tape for blisters, pads and bandages to stop bleeding, pad and paper for noting details, emergency blanket for shock/hypothermia. For most bushwalking trips at least **two** compression bandages should be carried in case of snake bite (a single compression bandage may not be long enough to properly bandage a limb). Further information on suggested first aid equipment can be obtained from St John Ambulance or Red Cross.
- Leaders should carry a mobile phone (and a battery phone recharger), however keep in mind that mobile phone coverage is **not** reliable outside (or even within!) urban areas. Note that a phone is also useful for navigation with various navigation apps). The leader should also download the *Emergency Plus App* onto their phone.
- The leader should record other emergency numbers in your phone or at hand in the checklist/information sheet (see number 5).
- For larger groups, or for activities with greater risk (e.g. snow camping), the leader should consider whether a PLB (Personal Locator Beacon) or similar device should be carried. The Club owns a PLB which can be borrowed at no cost for Club activities or by members for personal activities (see separate PLB guidelines).
- For longer or more remote activities, the leader should preferably carry (and know how to use!) a GPS. This is generally not required for short activities in well-marked areas.

## 2.3 Leading up to the activity

- Advertising of the event in Frozen Acres or Skimail should clearly indicate the expected difficulty of the event (including approximate duration, distance, elevation and terrain). If the event expects a particular degree of experience or expertise, this should be made clear (for example, if it is not suitable for first-time skiers or hikers).
- The leader should take bookings in advance, so that numbers for the activity are known. This may not be necessary for short, more “ad hoc” activities.
- The leader should be aware of the general experience level of the participants and try to ensure that beginners do not take on something beyond their abilities. The leader has discretion to decline to take any participant where the leader has doubts about the ability, fitness or preparedness of the participant.
- The leader should make less experienced participants (or those new to such Club events) aware of any equipment needed or other requirements. This can either be done in the advertising of the event, or when participants book with the leader. This may include information such as whether participants are expected to provide their

own food and camping gear for an overnight bushwalk, what footwear is suitable for a shorter ramble, and the like. The leader is not required to spoon feed participants – it is expected that in general participants can work out this information themselves or ask if they have queries.

- As well as the leader, there should be at least one other experienced person (an assistant) on the activity who is familiar with the intended route, and who can take over from the leader if the leader is injured or otherwise incapacitated. More assistants are desirable for larger groups.
- For larger groups, or activities where participants spread out over a distance, an assistant should “back mark” the group, to ensure that nobody is left behind, and to minimise the risk of slower participants taking the wrong route.
- Information about the intended route, expected time of return, and participants should be left with a reliable person who can contact authorities if the group is seriously overdue. A copy of the checklist can be used for this. Contact details for this person should be given to participants.
- Where practicable, plan for a quick way back to the cars or to shelter if the weather deteriorates or the party is unexpectedly slow.
- Leaders should also read and note the guidelines for participants.

### **3 Guidelines for participants**

- Participation in all Club activities is at the members’ own risk.
- Intending participants should book with the leader in advance, so that numbers for the activity are known. This may not be necessary for short, more “ad hoc” activities - check with the leader.
- Participants must fully read the information provided about the activity (in Frozen Acres or as otherwise provided) and check with the leader if there is any aspect which is unclear.
- Participants must be honest about their abilities and medical fitness and notify the leader of anything that may affect their ability to safely complete the activity. The leader has discretion to decline to take any participant where the leader has doubts about the ability, fitness or preparedness of the participant.
- The Club does not provide or arrange transport. However, the leader of the activity may be able to put participants in touch with others who can provide transport. Any consequential arrangements are entirely a matter for the members concerned.
- Appropriate personal health and rescue insurance is recommended. Club activities are often conducted in hazardous environments where there is a risk of injury or mishap regardless of the skill, experience, and preparation of leaders and participants.
- Keep together. Use the same route as the leader and do not get ahead of or behind the party. Keep the walker in front and behind in sight - call the leader to stop if necessary. If the party is large, a tail person is usually appointed to monitor slower walkers. The most common causes of separation are getting ahead of the leader, stopping to take photos or making a toilet stop without telling anyone. Do not assume you can drop behind and then easily catch up.

## 4 Safety information for all participants

Club activities are frequently in alpine or sub-alpine areas, where the environment can be hazardous, and weather can change extremely quickly. Participants should be properly equipped for severe weather - both hot and cold. Suggested minimum clothing and equipment to be carried by **all** participants for alpine or lengthy activities:

- Suitable backpack or bag to carry water, food, clothing and other essential equipment as mentioned below. Preferably a backpack or bag that allows both hands to be free.
- Dress appropriately for outdoor activities.
- Always bring a waterproof jacket or coat that is preferably breathable, such as Gore-Tex or similar.
- Bring warm clothing, e.g., polar-fleece, thermals, gloves and warm headgear (beanie), for unexpected cold weather. A number of lighter warm layers is usually better than thicker, heavier clothing.
- Hat, sunglasses, sunscreen.
- Strong, sturdy and comfortable footwear preferably with thick treaded soles is recommended. Walking boots with thick socks are best; joggers may be adequate for easy and medium terrain; if in doubt, contact the walk leader.
- Bring plenty of water to drink with a minimum of 1 litre per adult and 1.5 litres per child in normal weather and 2-3 litres for hot weather. Bring sufficient food, if the activity is longer than a couple of hours.
- It is recommended, but not essential, for all participants to carry a basic first aid kit containing, as the minimum, a wide compression bandage (for snake bites, sprains and breaks), some wide micropore surgical tape (all-purpose), band aids and pain killers. Some first aid needs arise more often than others: sunburn, thorn pricks, insect bites, abrasions and bruising from falls, blisters, heat exhaustion, and sprains and strains. Please note that there is no guarantee that an activity will include anyone with formal first aid training or qualifications.

## **5 Checklist/information sheet for leaders (to be completed before the activity is commenced)**

**Activity details:**

**Date:**

**Short Description:**

**Leader:**

**Assistant(s):**

**Expected Time of Return:**

**Person responsible for notifying authorities of late return:**

**Time to notify authorities:**

**Authority to notify (organisation and phone number):**

**Expected Route:**

**Participants (name and emergency contact number):**

**Safety equipment carried (e.g. PLB, GPS, mobile phone (give number)):**

**Other comments:**