



## WORDS OF WISDOM

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### GREAT RESPONSIBLE WALKS

We believe a great walk is a safe one – and one where you leave the environment as you found it. Here's a simple cut-out-and-keep guide to acting responsibly while on the trail. Laminate it and keep it handy for peace of mind.

#### THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF LEAVE NO TRACE

- 1: Plan ahead and prepare.
- 2: Walk and camp on durable surfaces like established tracks and campsites.
- 3: Dispose of waste properly – pack it in, pack it out.
- 4: Leave what you find.
- 5: Minimise campfire impacts. Use a lightweight stove. Where fires are permitted keep them small and use only fallen fuel and sticks. Put out the fire completely.
- 6: Respect wildlife. Observe wildlife from a distance and don't feed them. Store rations and rubbish securely.
- 7: Be considerate of your hosts and other visitors.

#### SAFETY DO

- Give complete route details to close relatives/friends or the police.
- Tell them when you are leaving and returning and any special medical conditions.
- Notify them of your safe return.
- Take the correct map and compass. Know how to use them.
- Take appropriate clothing/footwear for extreme weather conditions.
- Take waterproof matches and spare cold food.
- Carry a first aid kit.
- Carrying an emergency beacon.
- Phone home from the first phone box or police station you come to if overdue.

#### DON'T

- Don't overestimate your abilities. Allow time for the unexpected.
- Don't go faster than your slowest walker. At regular intervals do a group head count.
- Don't split up your group (except for below) during your trip. There's safety in numbers.
- Don't leave an injured person alone in the bush. A walking group of three or more will allow one to look after the injured while the other goes for help.
- Don't keep moving when lost. Find an open campsite with nearby water. Remember Your safety is dependent on your fitness, experience, trip leadership and equipment.

#### THE ENVIRONMENT

- Always walk on the track – even when wet and muddy.
- Camp at least 100m from lakes and streams.
- Deposit human waste in cat holes dug 20cm deep.
- Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.
- Preserve the past; examine but don't touch cultural/historical structures or artifacts. Leave rocks, plants and other objects as you find them.

*This guide was prepared with the help of Leave No Trace and Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad. See [Int.org.au](http://Int.org.au) and [bwrs.org.au](http://bwrs.org.au) for more details.*



## Be Prepared

Even the most basic bushwalk needs a plan – just ask any boy scout.



**Every time we** have emergencies such as bushfires, floods, storms or cyclones, far too few people seem to have a plan that anticipates what might occur and how to deal with it.

Unfortunately this also extends to bushwalking. In NSW alone around 130 bushwalkers a year get lost and require rescuing. Between 2004 and 2007, nearly 400 people were reported missing in the Blue Mountains and surrounding area, which led to 200 search and rescue operations. While even the best prepared and most skilled walkers can find themselves in unexpected circumstances, the number of bushwalkers requiring assistance seems to be growing, indicating a lack of understanding of the potential risks going bush entails.

Every walk should start with a plan that includes the basics such as location, how long will it take, what clothing, equipment and food to take, and what maps and other info is needed. Check the latest weather conditions to ensure you have the right gear, and don't be reluctant to change plans in the event of a severe weather forecast.

If a Total Fire Ban is declared or is likely, cancel your walk. It's not only you and your party that you are putting at risk, but also potential rescuers. If your walk is in a national or state park, check the park's website first. Leave the details of your trip with a responsible person who can raise the alarm if you become overdue. For more info visit: [www.police.nsw.gov.au/trek](http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/trek)

Many walking locations will have mobile phone coverage, so if something goes wrong and you need to contact emergency services by phone, it's best to ask for the police. In Australia, police are primarily responsible for land-based search and

rescue. They have the capability and expertise to organise the rescue of people in trouble in the bush. Triple Zero (000) is Australia's primary telephone number to call for assistance in life-threatening or time-critical emergency situations. Dialling 112 directs you to the same 000 call service and is better for less dire circumstances.

Many bushwalkers choose to carry Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) which are much cheaper, more compact, lighter and more sophisticated than ever. Unlike mobile phones, PLBs are specifically designed for use in an emergency. They're waterproof and have batteries that must operate the device for a minimum of 25 hours.

Activating a PLB in an emergency situation makes it so much quicker, easier and safer to find someone in trouble. A GPS-enabled PLB can relay much more information than simply the distress location. When registered properly with AMSA (Australian Maritime Safety Authority), a 406 MHz distress beacon can provide the Rescue Coordination Centre Australia with details of the person registered the beacon as well as emergency contact names and contact numbers. Some allows to note trip itineraries, so when a beacon is activated the RCC will have access to their current movements can better organise the most suitable response.

Carrying a PLB does not replace advising a responsible person of your trip details. Good technology does not fully compensate for poor preparation. Planning your trip, including provision for emergencies, is a habit worth cultivating. That way you can really enjoy the experience and your family and friends will be reassured that help will be available quickly and effectively should an emergency arise.

