



# Members Handbook

*Brisbane Bushwalkers Club Inc*



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[www.bbww.org.au/MembersHandbook.pdf](http://www bbw.org.au/MembersHandbook.pdf)

**Members Handbook**  
**Brisbane Bushwalkers Club Inc**  
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## 1 Introducing Brisbane Bushwalkers Club Inc

### About this Members Handbook

This handbook is primarily for new members of BBW. You should read it thoroughly and then keep it for reference. You are expected to understand and comply with it.

The handbook explains the peculiarities of the Brisbane Bushwalking Club, its administrative procedures, culture, facilities and rules. You will know what to expect from the Club, and what the Club expects from you.

The handbook gives an introduction to bushwalking, so that first-time walkers will have the basic knowledge required for their enjoyment and safety.

The appendices contain more details on selected topics.

Suggestions for improvement of future editions are welcome, and should be addressed to the club's committee.

### Typical Day Walk

Members select an activity from the magazine or website, then nominate for it by one of the methods specified by the leader. Participants meet at the designated place and time, which may be as early as 0500 am, depending on the destination. As the car journey may take one or two hours, car pooling is used to reduce transport costs and environmental impact. You may be asked to contribute money to help cover car costs.

The walk will take several hours, including stops for morning tea and lunch and visiting features of interest such as lookouts or waterfalls. There can be considerable variation in the length and steepness of the walk, but the club regards 12km as a "medium" walk.

There are no facilities on the walk. Members must carry all food, water and gear, including emergency equipment. Walkers accept that they may become hot and sweaty, tired, dirty and wet. Aching muscles, minor scratches, blisters, ticks and leeches may also occur along the way.

On return to the cars, members change into clean clothes and shoes for the trip home, often stopping at a cafe on the way. An accurate time of return to the city is not guaranteed, so it is best not to make plans for that night.

By its very nature bushwalking may encompass some risk, so safety cannot be guaranteed by the Club or the leader. Every member has a duty to protect not only their own safety but also that of the others in the group.

The Club organizes a wide variety of activities, which may vary considerably from this description of a "typical day walk." Further information is available in the Activities chapter, and each activity is described in the Club magazine and on the on-line program.

### Club Operation

The Club meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month at Newmarket Memorial Hall, corner of Enoggera Rd and Ashgrove Ave, Newmarket. (But there is no meeting on the 4th Wednesday of

December.) Meetings start at 7:30pm. Leaders will speak about their walks at the meeting, and often there will be a guest speaker.

General Club business may also be discussed and supper is served at the end of the meeting. This is your opportunity to visit the library, the equipment officer, the treasurer, activity leaders, or just meet with friends.

A Club magazine is mailed to members each month except for December/January, which is a combined issue. It contains official notices, reports from the committee, training and other articles and descriptions of upcoming walks. Members are invited to contribute additional articles, such as post-trip reports and for-sale notices.

The Club is managed by a committee of eleven members which is elected at the annual general meeting in October each year. The committee meets monthly, and all Club members are welcome to attend.

The committee and members are governed by the rules which may only be changed by a general meeting of members. The committee has produced a set of by-laws which set out the day to day operations of the Club. Further management documents are Schedules to the bylaws. These include the privacy policy, the bushwalkers code, the risk management policy, the leaders guide, and this members handbook. All of these documents are available for inspection in the Club library and on the Club web site.

### **Member Benefits**

**people** The primary benefit of being in the Club is access to a group of people with similar interests to you. Almost any idea you have for an activity, there will be some people who will give it a go.

**activities** The Club organises a large number and variety of activities. Mostly bushwalking, but also some cycling, kayaking, canoeing, photography, abseiling and bird watching. The Club does not support rock climbing due to insurance limitations.

**training** You can learn a lot about bushwalking by participating in activities with other members. Occasionally the Club conducts training activities to improve members' skills in navigation, leadership, first aid and abseiling. However the Club does not hold formal training, or certification qualifications.

**library** The Club library has an extensive collection of books, magazines and maps of interest to bushwalkers. These may be borrowed for a small fee from the librarian at Club meetings.

**equipment** The Club owns a collection of bushwalking equipment including tents, packs and stoves, which can be borrowed for a small fee from the equipment officer at Club meetings.

**discounts** Several bushwalking equipment shops in Brisbane offer discounts to Club members.

**insurance** The Club has public liability insurance, as well as limited personal accident cover. The insurance policy is available for inspection in the library, and on the web site.

**first aid refund** Ordinary members who possess a current valid first

aid certificate can claim a discount on the annual Club subscription. Present your certificate to the treasurer when paying your subscription at a Club meeting.

**web site** The members only area of the Club website has the latest activities program, and other information of interest to Club members. Apply for access online at [www.bbw.org.au/memberslt/pegister.php](http://www.bbw.org.au/memberslt/pegister.php)

### **Joining the Club**

If you have a friend who might like to join the Club, proceed as follows.

Attend a meeting, where you will get a chance to meet members, listen to some leaders and make some friends. Some Club members will be on hand to describe how the Club operates and answer any questions you may have. We get about 20 new members at a meeting, so you will not be alone!

If you decide to join, complete the application form, sign the disclaimer, and pay the nomination fee to the treasurer. (The nomination fee is set at the AGM each year and is shown on page 2 of the Club magazine.) You will receive a membership card and a copy of the Members Handbook. You should read the book thoroughly and then keep it as a reference.

### **MinlMaxS walk**

MinlMaxS stands for Minimum Impact Maximum Safety. You should nominate for a MinlMaxS walk soon after you join. In fact it is best if this is your first walk with the Club. At the MinlMaxS walk, the leader will explain some safety tips, minimum impact guidelines and what is expected of Club members. This reinforces what you have already read about in the Members Handbook. The walk is also a good opportunity to meet others who are also new members.

### **New Members Weekend**

New Members Weekends are held several times per year, at various locations. They include the content of a MinlMaxS walk, but have much more time for socialising and discussing issues in more detail. The aim is to assist members to gain knowledge of bushwalking skills, ethics, first aid, clothing, equipment and food items. It is a venue to get to know more people in the Club and do some walking. It is planned to be more social than a strenuous walking event with time for talking and sharing ideas.

The camps are also attended by experienced members who share their knowledge and demonstrate a variety of equipment to illustrate the advantages of different types of stove, tent, backpack, etc. Many new members are already experienced walkers and the camp becomes a venue for sharing experiences and ideas.

If you are new to camping, you can get some assistance from the leader or from the Equipment Officer, regarding the equipment that you will need. For suggestions of what equipment to bring, see page 16. Most items can be hired from the Club.

### **Membership Classes**

Your initial membership is called 'Probationary'. Probationary membership lasts for six months, and you are entitled to attend all Club activities and receive all member benefits except that you may

not lead activities, vote, stand for committee position, or receive a first aid certificate discount.

To progress to 'Ordinary' [ or 'Full' ] membership you must attend a MinlMaxS walk and four other Club walks. It is a good idea to do the MinlMaxS first, but this is not compulsory. (A New Members Weekend counts as a MinlMaxS and another walk, so you would need to do only three other walks.) Most members satisfy these requirements within the six months probationary period, but there is no strict time limit. You can renew your Probationary membership as often as you need to.

Once you have satisfied these requirements, complete the appropriate form, have it checked by the Membership Officer, and pay your membership fee to the treasurer. The amount you have to pay will be discounted in a pro-rata fashion according to your current Probationary membership expiry date.

Guest membership allows children of members to attend designated family activities. It also allows members of Bushwalking Australia affiliated clubs, and non-members with specialist knowledge, to participate in Club activities.

Annual membership fees are set at the AGM each year and are shown on page 2 of the Club magazine. Membership fees are due by 31 January. There is a discount for members who share an address and elect to share a magazine and pay their subscription together.

### **Privacy**

The Club does not hold very much information about you, but you should realise that the information it does hold cannot be guaranteed to be kept confidential. The contact information that you supply (name, phone, suburb, email) will generally be available to other members. Several members will have access to your mailing address. The Club keeps records of activities including the names of attendees.

The Club does not make its membership list available to advertisers.

The privacy statement is a Schedule to the Club bylaws, and is available for inspection on the web site and in the library.

### **Bushwalkers Code**

The bushwalkers code is a set of rules to minimise our impact on the environment in which we walk. Members should protect plants and animals, remove rubbish, keep streams and lakes clean, take care with fires, camp carefully, keep to the track, consider others, and respect our cultural heritage. For details, see page 22.

### **Family**

Children may join the Club as a guest member, and can go on designated family activities. The children have to be under the care and control of a parent or legal guardian at all times - they are not left in the care of the leader or the Club.

If you may be interested in bringing your children on some designated family activities, and meeting some other like-minded families, you should contact the family coordinator, whose name and contact details are on page 2 of the monthly magazine.

## 2 Club Activities

### Members Responsibilities on Club Activities

- Read, understand and comply with the Members Handbook.
- Select activities that you are capable of completing safely.
- Give your details to the leader, via the method preferred for that activity.
- Ensure you are a financial member on the day of the activity.
- Take food, water, equipment, clothing and footwear appropriate for the activity.
- Remain with the party for the duration of the activity.
- Accept the instructions of the leader.
- Be responsible for your own safety, and protect the safety of others in the group.

### Grading Scheme

Each activity organised by the Club will be assigned a grade by the leader. It indicates the type of activity, the type of terrain expected and the fitness required.

Members are responsible for ensuring they are capable of doing the walk for which they nominate. Members are encouraged to contact the walk leader and discuss fitness and skill levels if they are in any doubt.

Group safety and enjoyment can be jeopardised if an individual is unable to complete a walk, therefore walk leaders can refuse to take a member if they are unsure of their capabilities.

The Club recommends that new members start with 3B grade walk (ie grade '3' terrain and grade 'B' fitness), even if they walk frequently and consider themselves to be fit. They should then progress through the various grades until they are able to accurately gauge personal ability and performance in relation to the Club walk gradings.

**Family** If the first letter of the grade is an F, this indicates that the activity is for Families, and members may bring their children. Members without children are not able to participate in family walks, unless specifically invited by the leader.

**Distance** The next letter in the grade indicates the distance of the walk. For multi-day walks, this refers to the distance per day.

S short: less than 10 km per day

M medium: between 10 and 15km per day

L long: between 15 and 20 km per day

X extra long: more than 20km per day

**Type of Activity** The final 2 or 3 letters in the grade indicate the type of activity.

BC base camp: camping near the car, and walking from there.

DW day walk: an activity that finishes the same day it starts.

NW night walk: an activity occurring at night.

**TW** through walk: Stay out for one or more nights, carrying your tent with you.

**ETW** easy through walk.

**S&T** safety and training.

**ROG** rogaine.

**SOC** social activity.

**KYK** kayak: This activity involves paddling a canoe or kayak.

**CYC** cycle: A bike ride.

**ABS** abseil:

**Terrain** The number in the grade describes the difficulty of the terrain, and thus indicates the skill level required.

- 1 Path with smooth surface and low gradient
- 2 Well-formed path or graded track with some minor obstacles
- 3 Graded track, with obstacles such as rock or root intrusions, fallen debris, or creek crossings
- 4 Rough, unformed track or open terrain, with obstacles such as rock or root intrusions, fallen debris, or creek crossings
- 5 Rough or rocky terrain that may require use of hands, and/or creek rock hopping that requires small to moderate steps. Fallen debris possible
- 6 Steep, rough or rocky terrain requiring use of hands, and/or creek rock hopping requiring moderate to large steps or jumps. Fallen debris possible
- 7 Climb or descend steep rock, using hand or footholds. May be some exposure. Good upper body strength required
- 8 Climb or descend near vertical rock with exposure, using widely spaced or small hand or footholds. Climbing skills may be required. Good upper body strength required
- 9 Sustained climbing or descent of vertical or near vertical rock with exposure, using widely spaced or small hand or foot holds. Advanced climbing skills may be required. Good upper body strength required

**Fitness and Endurance** The final letter in the grade indicates the level of fitness required for the activity.

- A Basic - Generally suitable for new bushwalkers. Up to four hours of walking and possibly minor hills. Slower pace with frequent breaks
- B Easy - About five hours of walking and up to 300m of elevation gain/loss per day
- C Moderate - About six hours of walking and up to 600m of elevation gain/loss per day. Agility required
- D High - High fitness, endurance and agility required. Up to eight hours of walking and about 1000m of elevation gain/loss per day
- E Challenging - Very high fitness, endurance and agility required. Up to or more than twelve hours of walking and greater than 1000m of elevation gain/loss per day

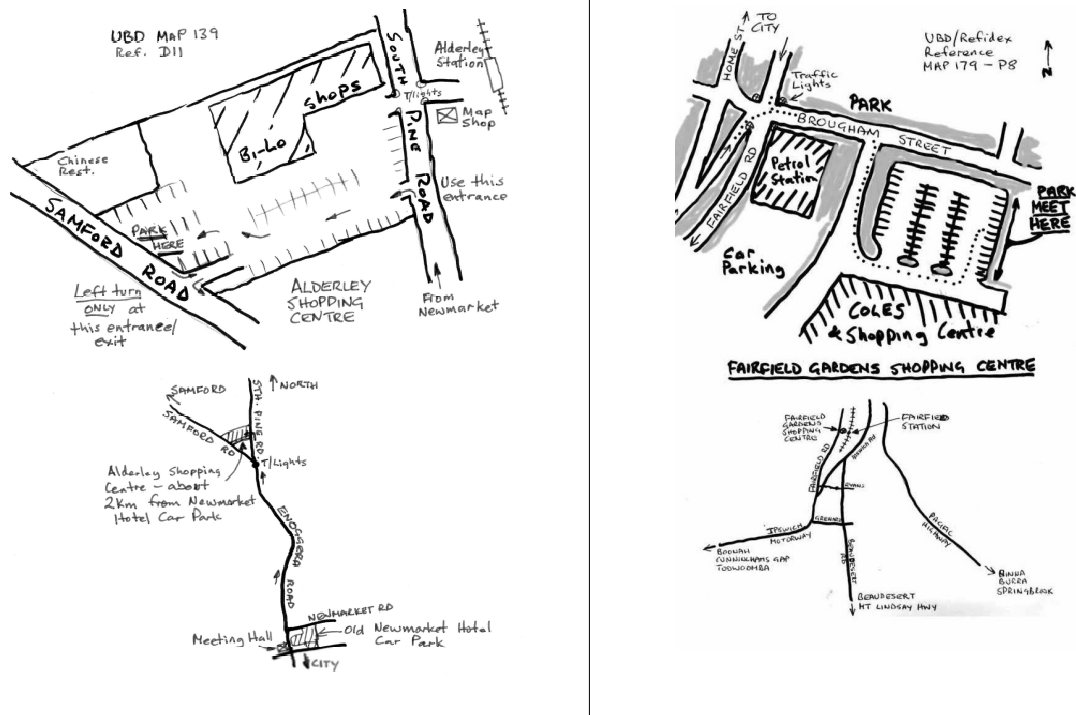


Figure 1: Meeting places at Alderley and Fairfield

### Nominating for a Club Activity

The program of activities is available on the Club web site, and published monthly in the Club magazine. In both places, you can see complete details of the activity.

The leader will decide which methods of nomination will be accepted for each activity. This may include writing your name on an activity nomination sheet at a Club meeting, or nominating online via the member's area of the Club website. Leaders usually publish their telephone number for nominations, and sometimes their email address.

Regardless of the method used to nominate, you must supply all the required details. Your phone number is needed so the leader can contact you to discuss your attendance, or to advise you about changes to the plan. Please supply a fixed phone number if you can, to avoid the extra cost of calling mobiles. Your suburb is used to assist with car pooling arrangements.

Most activities have a limit on the number of people who may attend. If you nominate for an activity which is already full, then you are on reserve for the walk, and you cannot assume that you will be going. Contact the leader to discuss the situation. You might be able to take the place of somebody who withdraws. (You should not expect the leader to phone you if a place becomes available, even if you are the first on the reserve list).

The leader may reject any nomination if unsure about the suitability of the nominee. This may be due to the skills and fitness required, or any other reason.

**Meeting Places**

The leader will prescribe the place and time to meet for the activity. If you have special circumstances, you may be able to negotiate a different place to meet the group. (For example, if you live closer to the walk destination than you do to the meeting place.)

The most common meeting place for activities south of Brisbane is Fairfield Gardens shopping centre.

The most common meeting place for activities north of Brisbane is Alderley Shopping Centre .

**Cancellation**

Take care to only nominate for activities from which you are very unlikely to withdraw.

If you are unable to attend an activity for which you have nominated, advise the leader as soon as possible. It is unacceptable to simply not show up on the day.

If there is a cost involved for the activity, you may still be expected to pay it after you cancel. For example, National Park camping fees are non-refundable and the leader must pay the fee at booking time, days or weeks before the activity.

**Incidents**

If an incident involving injury or property damage occurs on a Club activity, the leader should report it to the committee using the Club Incident Report form. Incidents are reviewed by the committee to determine if it is appropriate to change any procedures. The report is filed, and may be referred to at a later date.

**Abseil Activities**

Club activities may include abseiling, with a few differences to procedure.

- Leaders may lead activities with abseil components only if they are authorised by the committee, under the guidance of the abseil co-ordinator.
- Members may attend abseiling activities only if they are appropriately experienced and competent. A leader or instructor can refuse a nomination for an abseil activity if they consider your level of abseil experience could impose unacceptable risk on the group.
- Members must sign an abseil disclaimer before participating in an activity which includes abseiling.
- Members must wear helmets while abseiling.
- Training will be provided to members periodically.
- The Club has an abseil co-ordinator who will oversee all aspects of abseiling in the Club, including abseil training, and the authorisation of leaders for abseil trips.
- The Club has some abseiling equipment, which will be hired to members for a fee.

### 3 Safety

Bushwalking, like any other activity, carries a risk of injury. Members of BBW must act to reduce the risk to a reasonable level, and then accept that reasonable level of risk.

You must consider safety when bushwalking:

- The bush is an uncontrolled environment. It has not been tamed by safety engineers, nor by your leader.
- The hazards in the bush are different to city hazards, so you must become familiar with them and know how to deal with them.
- You have a duty of care to ensure that everything reasonably practical is done to avoid activities that expose you, other members and the Club to unreasonable risk of injury or loss.

#### **You are Responsible for Safety**

As a member of a group activity, your primary concern should be your personal safety and well-being. However, you should also accept a reasonable degree of care for the safety and well-being of all other participants in the activity. You must avoid doing anything that exposes any person, including other participants in an activity, to unreasonable risk of injury or loss.

You should likewise avoid doing anything that exposes the Club to unreasonable risk of loss or liability.

The leader cannot predict all the hazards that will be encountered on an activity because the location and weather are uncontrolled and variable. The leader is not aware of your particular skills and limitations. The leader cannot be by your side from minute to minute, and cannot see what hazards you are facing.

Your responsibility begins in selecting an activity for which you have the necessary skills and understanding. The grading system will assist you, and if you have any doubts you should discuss it with the leader.

#### **First Aid**

Knowledge of First Aid can be a very significant benefit in the bushwalking environment. In an emergency situation there may be some delay before medical assistance becomes available. See page 25 for an outline of some important first aid procedures for bushwalking. The Club encourages members to attend a recognised first aid course, offering discounted subscriptions for ordinary members who have a valid current first-aid certificate. Every member must carry a first aid kit while attending club activities.

#### **Hazards**

Members must be aware of the hazards peculiar to bushwalking, and how to deal with them. The following table lists some hazards that are common to activities in South East Queensland, and some suggestions of how to minimise the associated risk.

This is not an exhaustive list of hazards that members might encounter on BBW activities. Members must make their own risk assessment of each situation they find themselves in, and choose the appropriate action in each case.

**Dislodged Rocks** When walking on a steep slope, rocks might be dislodged, which could fall on other walkers below. Wait until other walkers are clear before following them up or down a steep slope. If a rock is dislodged, immediately call "Rock!" to warn other walkers. If you hear the call of "Rock!" move out of the way immediately.

**Cold Exposure** to cold can quickly lead to disability and serious complications.

**Understand the three layer clothing system.** Carry warm clothes, food and water. Plan routes with opportunity for shelter.

**Lost** A group that is lost may not exit the bush at the planned time. This may result in an unexpected night out, or covering rougher terrain than expected which exceeds the skill levels of the group.

**Learn to navigate.** Carry a map and compass, and know how to use them. Plan an emergency exit route before starting the walk. Carry a GPS and PLB. Carry additional food and water.

**Separated** If you are separated from your party, you may be without some shared equipment, such as a map. Time will be spent trying to re-group, which may result in a night out.

Assign a "tail" walker. Tell someone before you leave the group, even for a moment. Leave your pack with the group when you leave, so it will be noticed before they move on. Keep an eye on the walker in front and behind. Shout "Hey Bob!" when the group is spread too far apart. Wait for all walkers at intersections along track.

**Rough Ground** The ground you walk on may have tree roots, rocks, logs and other uneven surfaces. These can lead to ankle injuries or falls. Tread carefully. Exercise your ankles. Wear appropriate footwear.

**Slow Rescue** If you are injured in the bush, it will take more time to get treatment. The rescue can be delayed by lack of communication and difficult access. Most places that BBW walks do not have mobile phone coverage.

Carry a PLB and mobile phone. Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return, and when to start the rescue. Carry additional food and water.

**Plants** There are several plants in south east Queensland that cause concern. Stinging trees, stinging nettles, wait-a-while vine.

Learn to recognise the plants. Don't touch them. Wear long trousers, gaiters, long sleeves and gloves. Don't eat anything from the bush. If unaware, ask the leader or another experienced walker.

**Animals** Ticks, leeches, ants, snakes, dingos.

Do not feed animals, nor leave food scraps available to them.

**Flicking bushes** As you walk past a bush you bend its branches and then let them flick back. Another walker close behind may be struck in the face.

Don't walk too close behind other walkers. Wear protective eye wear.

**Falling** Some terrain requires difficult steps or climbing manoeuvres, or it may be slippery. Select walks that you are capable of completing safely. If you come to a section where you are not confident, tell the other group members and request an alternative route. Use rope or climbing tape as a backup. Don't go near the edge!

**Scratches** Minor cuts and scratches are common in bushwalking as you brush against rocks and vegetation.

Wear long trousers and long sleeves. Wear gaiters. Accept minor cuts and scratches.

**Lightning** You may be seriously injured by a direct lightning strike, or by induced currents if you are near a lightning strike.

Move to lower ground before the storm arrives. Shelter amongst the shorter trees in the middle of the ridge. Sit on your pack with your feet close to your buttocks and your arms around your knees. Group members should stay 5 metres apart. See page 33.

**Bush Fire** Bush fires can travel rapidly, and leave no path for escape.

Don't walk in areas closed due to fire danger. Stay with companions. Avoid radiant heat by seeking shelter from a creek, waterhole, boulder, cleared area, wheel rut, mud, or stump. See page 31.

## 4 Equipment and Clothing

### What to Take

Each member attending an activity must take

- all of the items on the "always take" list below
- additional items specified by the leader in the walk description
- any extra items you require for your safety and comfort

### You are Responsible

Each member is responsible for taking appropriate equipment for the activity. Club leaders are not responsible for listing what equipment is appropriate, because this will be different for each member. Club leaders do not check the contents of members' packs before walks. Club leaders are not presumed to know the contents of members' packs.

What gear is appropriate will depend on the type of walk, the grade and the destination. It will also depend on the skill, fitness and tastes of the individual member.

On some occasions, activities do not finish by the expected time. Day walks might finish after dark, or the party may be forced to stay out overnight. You should carry the equipment necessary for your safety and comfort in this situation accordingly.

It is possible that the contents of your pack will get wet, or crushed or dropped. You should select and pack equipment in a way that can handle some rough treatment.

### Always Take

This list of gear is the minimum requirement for all members on all activities. You should take this equipment, and any extra equipment that you require for comfort or safety, in addition to any extra equipment specified by the leader. The leader will assume that all members have all this equipment.

**pack** Large enough, strong enough, comfortable enough to carry all your equipment for the activity.

**warm clothes** You should carry at least one warm garment in your pack, in addition to whatever you are wearing at the start of the walk. One of the garments (either in your pack or on your body) should be a long sleeve polypropylene thermal top, or similar. You should understand the three layer clothing system (see page 17) to make appropriate garment selections. Anything made of cotton, denim or flannelette does not count as warm clothing.

**Raincoat** Your raincoat must be long sleeve, able to totally block the wind, and substantially reduce the amount of rain that enters your clothes. You should understand the three layer clothing system to choose the appropriate garment. An umbrella is not a suitable substitute for a raincoat.

**food** Bring enough food for the duration of the activity, and some spare food in case the activity is extended unexpectedly. Most walks will stop for morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. It is important to eat some high-kilojoule food at these breaks.

Hunger can contribute to hypothermia, fatigue and increased risk of injury.

**hat** A hat is required for sun protection, rain protection, and warmth.

**footwear** For walking activities, footwear should be closed-toe shoes or boots that provide good foot protection.

**water** For day walks, you should bring enough water for the duration of the activity.

It is best to have some extra in case the activity is extended unexpectedly. For your first walk, the club recommends you take 3 litres. Dehydration can lead to hypothermia, fatigue, and increased risk of injury.

**paper and pencil** A pencil and paper may be important in situations where you are separated from the party and need to leave a note.

**whistle** Carry a whistle to assist if you are separated from the party. Carry it where you can reach it quickly. Make three blasts, each one second long with a one second pause between. Then listen for a response. Repeat after fifteen seconds.

**torch** If the activity is extended unexpectedly, you may require a torch to safely return to the car. Make sure you have fresh batteries.

**first aid kit** You can purchase a first aid kit from camping stores, pharmacies, or first aid organizations, or you can construct your own. It is best to keep it in a sturdy watertight container.

**change of clothes and shoes** Members should take a change of clothes and shoes, in a separate bag. These will be left in the car, and used at the completion of the activity. It is possible that clothes will become wet or dirty during the activity, and clean clothes are desirable for the car ride home, or visit to a cafe.

### Base Camp Equipment

When you have been camping a few times, you will get to know what you need and what you prefer. Here are some suggestions for first-time campers, such as attendees at the Club New Members Camp. Most of this equipment can be hired from the Club.

**tent** For base camps your tent does not have to be especially lightweight – it goes in your car and not on your back.

**sleeping mat** A Thermarest, li-lo, foam, or air bed. This is to make your bed comfortable, and to stop the cold rising from beneath.

**warm bedding** A sleeping bag and/or your Doona from home. Don't forget your pillow. Bring warm pyjamas. The most common complaint from first time campers is "too cold in bed." Bring an extra blanket – you can always leave it by your feet if you don't need it.

**stove** A small camping style stove, or larger 2 burner family camping style. You should not depend on a fire at Club events.

**billy** A billy or saucepan and other cooking utensils.

**food Saturday:** breakfast, lunch suitable to go in daypack, evening meal. Sunday: breakfast and lunch. Nibbles for Saturday evening social time. Morning and afternoon tea for both days.

**usual day walking gear** Base camps include some walks, so you will need everything that you normally have on a walk.

**folding chair** There will be several hours of sitting around at a base camp.

### Suggestions

- along with your change of clothes leave some water in the car to drink on the way home
- large plastic peanut butter jars make sturdy watertight containers to protect equipment in your pack.
- 2 litre plastic soft drink bottles are cheap and reliable water containers.

### Hire Equipment from the Club

Some equipment is available for hire from the Equipment Officer. You need to attend meetings to collect and return the equipment.

The hire period is from one meeting to the next. Tents and packs may be hired for \$10, stoves and self-inflating mats for \$5, and foam mats for \$2. (hire costs may change).

PLB and GPS units are available on loan to leaders only at no charge.

You may book equipment by phoning the Equipment Officer. There is a \$20 deposit for each item, which will be refunded when the equipment is returned in good condition. Please return the equipment clean and dry, and inform the Equipment Officer of anything requiring attention.

### Three Layer Clothing System

Bushwalkers need to be prepared for a wide range of weather conditions. They may be at high altitudes, outdoors for a long time, including day and night, and have no shelter available. Also, bushwalkers are sometimes active and therefore warm, but sometimes they stop for meals, views, or first aid and they can quickly feel the cold.

The three layer clothing system is a set of clothes that can protect you from cold. You should carry each of the three layers on every walk to be prepared for bad weather, or unexpected late return.

### Thermals

The first layer is called thermal underwear or simply 'thermals'. Its primary purpose is to remove moisture from your skin, since contact with even a thin film of water will cool you down very quickly.

Thermals must be worn touching the skin. They will not perform if worn over other garments, such as cotton underwear. They will not perform if they are loose fitting.

Thermals are made of polypropylene or wool, and there are some other synthetic materials with brand names that do a similar job.

Thermals come in many shapes: vest, short sleeve top, long sleeve top, crop top, bra, long trousers, boxer shorts, briefs, socks, beanie, neck warmer, balaclava. They come in various weights or thicknesses.

Your collection should start with a thick, long sleeve top, which you should carry every day, even in summer. You may not wear it very often, so keep it clean in a zip-lock bag and you won't need to wash it.

Thermals are often used as pyjamas when through walking or base camping.

### **Fleece**

The second layer is called the "fleecy." It is also know as the insulating layer, polar fleece, or polartec. Its job is to insulate you from heat loss by trapping air. It is thick and fluffy, can be made of wool, although most are synthetic fabrics, including recycled plastics.

The fleece layer is available in different thicknesses and shapes. Your collection should start with a thick, long sleeve top. It would be quite rare for you to need it desperately on a summer day walk, but you should carry it anyhow just in case. It is also comfortable to wear during the lunch stop , or to the coffee shop afterwards.

### **Rain Coat**

The third layer is called the shell, outer layer or rain-coat. Its primary job is to stop heat loss from wind, as well as a secondary function of reducing the rate at which you get wet in the rain.

Shell garments come in several shapes: trousers, jackets, gloves, gauntlets, and there is an amazing variety of materials, including breathable membranes.

Your collection should start with a long jacket that covers your shorts and includes a hood. You should carry this garment on every walk, even on fine days in summer.

### **Fourth Layer**

The three layer clothing system is intended to protect you from the cold. But many walks around Brisbane are done in warm weather, so you will want something else to wear as well. Look for garments that can withstand thorny bushes, are cool to wear, and will protect you from the sun. Quick drying nylon is a good choice, as are trousers with legs that can zip on and off.

When the weather gets cool, you can wear these clothes with your three layers. Remember to put the thermals next to your skin.

### **About Rain**

If there is a brief shower on your walk, you may be able to use your raincoat to stay almost dry, and then you can dry out after the rain has gone.

However, if the rain persists for several hours or days, you will eventually get wet. It is therefore important to have clothing and equipment that performs satisfactorily when wet.

Often in Queensland the rain will fall on a warm day and you will be more comfortable without your raincoat, provided you have

appropriate clothing that works when it is wet and dries reasonably quickly.

### **About Cotton**

Cotton clothes (including flannelette, denim and sweat shirts) will absorb water from rain and perspiration. As they get wet they become very heavy and lose their insulation properties. They may be worn in fine weather but they are not suitable as warm clothes. Most experienced bushwalkers do not wear cotton garments.

### **Where to Buy Your Equipment**

The retailers listed below can provide expert advice on your specific equipment requirements, and will offer discounts to BBW members.

#### **Globe Trekker Adventure Gear**

142 Albert St, Brisbane Ph (07) 3221 4476  
[www.globetrekker.com.au](http://www.globetrekker.com.au)

#### **K2 Base Camp**

140 Wickham Street, Fortitude Valley Ph (07) 3854 1340  
[www.k2basecamp.com.au](http://www.k2basecamp.com.au)

#### **Mountain Designs**

109 Albert St, Brisbane Ph (07) 3221 6756  
120 Wickham St, Fortitude Valley Ph (07) 3216 1866  
27 High St, Toowong Ph (07) 3870 8387  
IKEA Home Centre, Pacific Highway, Springwood  
[www.mountaindesigns.com](http://www.mountaindesigns.com)

#### **Snowgum @ Silk Road**

130 Wickham Street, Fortitude Valley Ph (07) 3257 4177  
[www.silkroad.com.au](http://www.silkroad.com.au)

#### **Paddy Pallin**

138 Wickham St, Fortitude Valley Ph (07) 3252 4408  
[www.paddypallin.com.au](http://www.paddypallin.com.au)

#### **World Wide Maps and Guides**

Anzac Square Arcade, 267 Edward Street Brisbane Ph (07) 3221 4330  
[www.worldwidemaps.com.au](http://www.worldwidemaps.com.au)

## A History of the Club

When an adventurous South African, John Taylor, arrived in Brisbane on his way walking around the world, he was amazed there was no Bushwalking Club here and wrote of his surprise to the editor of the "Courier Mail". Nancy Shaw and Mickey Miller contacted him and together they decided to call a public meeting on 19th August 1948 to see if there was sufficient interest to form a club. Ninety-nine people attended that first meeting. It was decided to form an enabling committee of seven to draw up a constitution to be presented to the first meeting held on 15 September. Eager to get things under way, it was also decided to have a day walk soon, before the new constitution was finalised. Bert Salmon volunteered to lead a group into the Mt Gravatt area on 29th August. He knew the area well and would work out an interesting route.

The Brisbane Bushwalkers had begun!

At the meeting on 15th September a committee was formed and there were suggestions of places to visit, routes to take, and how to get there. Ironically, John Taylor did not join the Club, much less hold a position on the management committee, as he was soon to continue his travels.

Private transport was very scarce in those days so there was a great reliance on trams and trains. The first through walk was Petrie to Dayboro, from station to station. By the end of 1948 the Club had volunteer leaders of day walks, a string of weekend camps planned, social get-togethers such as dances, swimming parties and general evenings which all helped members feel the Club was running well and had a great future.

In the first year the "Routes and Survey Committee" organised a walk on average every second weekend for a total of 19 day walks and 11 through walks.

14 base camps and 3 through walks were held the second year. Through walks included Petrie to Dayboro, Closeburn/Cedar Creek/Mt Samson and an "overseas venture" Dunwich/Blue Lake/Point Lookout, Stradbroke Island.

The 1951-52 year saw the number of through walks increase. The introduction of the "semi-base camp" saw a format in which participants camped the night near the starting point of the walk to be completed the next day. This practice proved ideal for the longer walks and those located farther from Brisbane.

In February 1957, honorary life membership was introduced in the Constitution, when Julie Henry was given the inaugural award. Our honorary life members are:

- Julie Henry (27 February 1957)
- Margaret Kentwell (27 April 1966)
- Tom Young (27 April 1966)
- Esther Jurrott (22 September 1971)
- Graham Jurrott (22 September 1971)
- Ken Shea (27 October 1971)
- James Cuthbertson (26 September 1973) (deceased)
- Alan Hobson (27 July 2005)
- Ron Farmer (27 July 2005)
- Peter Hunt (27 July 2005)

Nowadays, the number of walks held each weekend has increased from one or two to many times that number. This increase in activity has resulted from a growing Club membership and the introduction of limits to the number of walkers on each outing. Benefits have included a wider choice, with through-walks, day-walks scheduled each weekend and the occasional base camp. Limits on the number of participants on walks arose due to conservation and safety concerns.

First aid, photography and social events were features of the Club from the beginning and continue to this day. Other outdoor events organised by the Brisbane Bushwalkers Club include kayaking, canoeing, cycling, abseiling and rogaining.

1998 saw the Golden Jubilee of the Brisbane Bushwalkers Club and an organising committee was formed to arrange a year to celebrate the Club's first 50 years. An extensive variety of commemorative activities followed including a past walk from each year in the Club's history.

## **B Bushwalker's Code**

Club members must observe Minimum Impact Bushwalking' – a code of ethics and behaviour aimed at preserving the ecological and wilderness values of our environment.

### **Protect Plants and Wildlife**

Australia's plants and wildlife are unique. They are national treasures that should be protected for future generations. Damaging or removing native plants not only destroys part of the environment, it is illegal in most parts of the country.

Many areas are fragile and may take years to recover from damage. Wherever possible, find a way around alpine herb fields, moss beds, and coastal and wetland plants.

### **Remove Rubbish**

Rubbish is one of the biggest threats to our natural areas. It's no longer acceptable to burn or bury rubbish, or to leave it for others to remove. Litter is unpleasant and harmful to wildlife. Plan your bushwalking to cut down on potential rubbish. Repack food into bags or re-useable containers to avoid cans, plastic, and glass waste.

Carry out what you carry in.

If you come across other people's rubbish, do the area a favour: remove their rubbish as well.

### **Keep Creeks and Lakes Clean**

Toilet wastes and rubbish contamination have already polluted the water in our creeks and lakes. To lessen the risk of contamination and to protect water quality:

- Where there is a toilet, use it.
- In areas without toilet facilities bury your toilet waste. Choose a place at least 50 metres from tracks, camping sites, popular areas and water sources. Dig a shallow hole 15 cm deep with the soil's organic layer and bury all toilet waste and paper. This will stop the waste contaminating water sources. Using a small trowel will make it easier to bury toilet waste.
- When using water for washing yourself or your utensils, take the water and wash well away from the water source. Drain used water into the soil so that it is filtered before re-entering the lake or creek.
- As soaps and detergents are harmful to water life and other users, these should also be drained into the soil.

### **Take Care with Stoves and Fires**

Fire is one of the greatest threats to our natural environment. The devastating effects of fire are obvious. Fires use up wood, destroy insects and other animal life, and they can scar sites with blackened and charred fireplaces. Fallen wood, especially larger branches and logs, is the source of food and shelter for many forest animals and plants.

Take portable fuel stoves for cooking; they are fast, clean, efficient, and reduce the risk of wildfire. Know how to operate your stove

safely to protect yourself and the environment. Use stoves at least 2 metres from dry vegetation and guard against knocking them over.

Carry out empty fuel cartridges. If you must use a fire:

- Be aware of fire bans and the higher fire risk during summer months. You may need a permit for your fire. Keep fires small and efficient. Use existing fireplaces if possible.
- Use only dead wood. Select wood from riverbeds or areas where wood is plentiful.
- Make sure the fire is completely out by dousing it with water and checking the ashes are cold. Dismantle the fire site, and scatter unburnt wood before leaving the area.
- NEVER leave fires unattended.

### **Camp Carefully**

Practice "No Trace" camping:

- Use campsites where they are provided.
- Use modern equipment that doesn't damage the environment and helps you to be self-reliant. Never cut vegetation for tent poles and sleeping areas.
- Leave the area in as natural a state as possible. Do not dig trenches
- Camp on hard or sandy surfaces where possible.
- Keep your camping sites compact; do not clutter up an area and spoil the atmosphere for others.

### **Keep to the Track**

Remember that smaller parties have less impact on the environment and other users. Stay on established tracks where possible, as this confines any damage.

When there is no track, keep to hard and open ground where possible. Avoid creating track that causes water erosion. Do not take short cuts between sections of track.

### **Consider Others**

Get permission if you have to cross private or leasehold land.

Be courteous to landowners and do not help yourself to private facilities unless invited.

Leave gates as you found them. When you open a gate, make sure the last person through knows it has to be closed.

Move carefully around and away from livestock.

Ensure your behaviour and activities don't disturb or offend others.

Comply with the regulations governing the control and protection of our National Parks and other nature reserves.

### **Respect Our Cultural Heritage**

Many places in Australia have special spiritual or historical significance. Some places are sacred to the Aborigine, while others have important European values. Recognise the spiritual or historical

significance of these places and treat them with respect. Obtain permission from traditional landowners or the relevant land manager to visit sensitive areas.

**8 Point Checklist**

- Protect Plants and Animals
- Remove Rubbish
- Keep Streams and Lakes Clean
- Take Care With Fires
- Camp Carefully
- Keep to the Track
- Consider Others
- Respect Our Cultural Heritage

## C First Aid in the Bush

Acknowledgement: The information in this article has been obtained by reference to the Queensland Ambulance Service publication "First Aid - Responding to Emergencies" Reprinted November 2001.

### Snakebite

Use the pressure immobilizing technique to slow the rate at which venom enters the circulation. The key points are:

- 1 Apply firm pressure over the bite site, using your hand if necessary.
- 2 Apply a crepe roller bandage, or improvised material that can be torn into strips 10-15 cm wide, and exert firm pressure over the bite area.
- 3 For a bite on the leg or arm, use a second crepe roller bandage over the bite site and work upwards to cover as much of the limb as you can, Apply the bandage as tightly as you would for a sprained ankle but not so tightly as to cut off circulation below the bandage.
- 4 Immobilize the affected limb with a splint to reduce muscle movement. Help the victim to rest if possible and do not let the victim stand or walk. Bring transport to the victim, unless this will cause a delay of 2 hours or more.
- 5 Do not remove the bandages or splints until the victim has reached medical care and then only if you are instructed to do so.
- 6 If the bandage is applied too tightly, circulation may be cut off below it.

Signs of impaired circulation are discoloration of the fingers or toes below the bandage or the victim complains of sensations of coldness or numbness. If any of these symptoms or signs occurs, loosen the bandage sufficiently to let blood flow return.

- 7 Most bites occur on a lower limb, usually around the ankle. For bites on the head or trunk, do not try to use the pressure immobilization technique but help the victim to rest completely until medical assistance is obtained.
- 8 Do not cut the bite to try to drain the venom, do not suck or wash the bite, and do not apply a tourniquet.

Symptoms or signs of poisonous snakebites may appear quickly or over the course of many hours, They include:

- 1 Paired or single fang marks in the skin.
- 2 Nausea, vomiting.
- 3 Headache.
- 4 Altered conscious state.
- 5 Double vision or blurred vision.
- 6 Problems with speaking and/or swallowing.
- 7 Weakness in extremities and/or paralysis.
- 8 Respiratory distress or cardiac arrest.

## 9 Clotting defects.

### **Hypothermia**

Hypothermia is a life-threatening condition in which the body's warming mechanisms fail to maintain normal body temperature and the entire body cools to 35 degrees C or lower. The victim will die if not given adequate care.

The symptoms and signs of hypothermia are

- 1 Shivering (which may be absent in later stages).
- 2 Slow, irregular pulse.
- 3 Numbness.
- 4 Glassy stare.
- 5 Apathy and decreasing levels of consciousness.
- 6 Abnormal co-ordination, trouble in walking.

The initial response to hypothermia is:

- 1 Confirm the presence or absence of a pulse.
- 2 If insulation or shelter is available, remove any wet clothing and dry the victim.
- 3 If shelter is not available, wrap something dry over the victim's wet clothing to prevent exposure to cold wind that could chill the body at a rapid rate. Be extremely gentle in handling the person.
- 4 Warm the body gradually by wrapping the victim in blankets or putting on dry clothing and removing them to a warm environment. If available, apply a heat source to the armpits and groins. If no other heat source is available, use your own body as a source of heat.
- 5 If the victim is alert, give the victim warm liquids to drink.
- 6 Do not warm the victim too quickly, for example by immersing the victim in warm water, or exposing them to a fire or heater. Rapid warming of the body may cause the onset of dangerous heart rhythms. Do not rub or massage the victim or give alcohol.
- 7 Call for medical assistance if possible.

### **Heat Exhaustion**

Heat exhaustion typically occurs after long periods of strenuous exercise in a hot environment. It is associated with insufficient replacement of fluid lost through sweating, which decreases the blood volume. Symptoms are: normal or below normal skin temperature; cool, moist, pale skin progressing to red skin; headache; nausea; dizziness and weakness; exhaustion; sweating; and rapid, weak pulse. Heat exhaustion is normally treated by:

- 1 Encouraging the victim to rest lying down with the legs slightly raised.
- 2 If fully conscious, give small drinks of cool water to drink. If the victim is vomiting and unable to take any fluids, arrange for urgent medical treatment.

- 3 If the victim is unconscious, position them on their side and care for the airway, breathing and circulation if CPR procedures are known.

### **Heat Stroke**

Heat stroke is the most severe heat emergency. It develops when the body systems are overwhelmed by heat and begin to stop functioning. Sweating stops because body fluids are low. When sweating stops, the body cannot cool itself effectively, and body temperatures rapidly rise. It soon reaches a level at which the brain and other vital organs, such as the heart and kidneys, begin to fail. If the body is not cooled, convulsions, unconsciousness and death will result. The signs of heat stroke include:

- 1 High body temperature (often as high as 40 degrees C).
- 2 Red, hot and dry skin.
- 3 Progressive deterioration in the conscious state.
- 4 Full, bounding pulse.
- 5 Rapid, shallow, noisy breathing.
- 6 As consciousness deteriorates, the circulation system begins to fail and the pulse becomes weak and irregular. Without prompt care, the heat stroke victim will die.

If heat stroke is suspected, follow these general care steps immediately:

- 1 Stop the person from continuing any activity (the victim may be beyond the point of making a rational decision).
- 2 Remove the person from the hot environment into shade.
- 3 Cool the body. Loosen any tight clothing and remove clothing soaked with perspiration. Apply cool wet cloths to the skin and fan the victim.
- 4 Give cool, clear fluids if the victim is fully conscious. (Not too quickly).
- 5 Minimize shock (see below).
- 6 Seek urgent medical care.
- 7 A victim of heat stroke should not resume normal activities the same day.

### **Stemming Loss of Blood**

Be particularly aware of the risks of cross-infection and avoid direct contact with blood and other substances that have the potential to transmit communicable diseases. Wear gloves if they are available and remember to wash your hands.

To control external bleeding, first expose the wound and check there is no visible foreign body in the wound. Then follow these general steps:

- 1 Place direct pressure on the wound with a sterile dressing pad, or improvise with any clean cloth such as a towel or handkerchief. Using a pad or cloth will help keep the wound free from germs. Place a hand over the pad or cloth and apply firm pressure. If you do not have a pad or cloth available, ask

the victim to apply firm hand pressure. As a last resort, use your own hand.

- 2 Elevate the injured area above the level of the heart and let the victim rest in a comfortable position.
- 3 Apply a pressure bandage to hold the pad or cloth in place. You may do this with a folded triangular bandage placed over the wound and tied over the site for extra pressure, or with a roller bandage.
- 4 If bleeding continues, do not attempt to add more padding because the increased bulk will reduce the pressure on the wound. Remove the bandage and pad and reassess how they were applied. Replace the pad with a new one in the correct position.
- 5 Observe the victim closely for signs of shock (see below).
- 6 Periodically check the circulation beyond the bandage to make sure it is not too tight. Look for cold, pale skin, toes or fingers that do not return to normal colour after compressing the nail, or complaints of numbness or tingling.

### **Shock and Internal Bleeding**

Shock is a life-threatening condition. When someone becomes injured or becomes suddenly ill, normal body functions of circulation of oxygen-rich blood may be interrupted. With more severe injuries or illnesses, the body may be unable to adjust. When the body is unable to meet its demands for oxygen because blood fails to circulate adequately, shock occurs. The common symptoms are:

- 1 Restlessness or irritability.
- 2 Pale, cool, moist skin.
- 3 Rapid breathing.
- 4 Rapid and weak pulse.
- 5 Excessive thirst.
- 6 Nausea and/or vomiting.
- 7 Altered conscious state.
- 8 As the victim's condition deteriorates, the symptoms and signs will become more pronounced.

The general care you give in any emergency will help reduce the effects of shock. Specific care for shock is:

- 1 Prevent further injury.
- 2 Check airways, breathing and circulation and respond if CPR procedures are known.
- 3 Control any external bleeding as soon as possible to minimize blood loss.
- 4 Help the victim to rest comfortably. This is important because pain and fear can intensify the body's stress and accelerate the progression of shock.
- 5 Help the victim to maintain normal body temperature.
- 6 Reassure the victim.
- 7 Provide care for specific conditions that are present.

- 8 Continue checking airways, breathing and circulation and level of response.
9. Elevate the legs slightly to assist the return of blood to the vital organs, unless you suspect head, neck or back injuries, or possible broken bones in the hips or legs. If you suspect a heart attack or stroke, or if you are unsure of the victim's condition, do not raise the legs.
- 10 Do not give the victim anything to eat or drink, even though the person is likely to be thirsty. The victim's condition may be severe enough to require surgery, in which case it is important that the stomach be empty. Temper limitations on food and drink intake in the light of the likely timeframe for arrival of medical help.
- 11 Advise the victim not to smoke.
- 12 Call for medical help if need be.
- 13 If the victim's condition deteriorates, unconsciousness may occur, and the victim must be positioned on the side and clear airway maintained.

In any serious injury, such as long falls and heavy impact, suspect internal bleeding. Internal bleeding may result in severe blood loss and shock. Symptoms of internal bleeding include:

- 1 Pain and tenderness around the area of impact or trauma, possibly with hardness, swelling and distension.
- 2 Discolouration of the skin in the injured area.
- 3 Anxiety or restlessness.
- 4 Rapid, weak pulse.
- 5 Rapid breathing.
- 6 Skin that feels cool or moist or looks pale or bluish.
- 7 Nausea and vomiting.
- 8 Excessive thirst.
- 9 Deteriorating conscious state.
- 10 Bleeding from body orifices.

If you suspect internal bleeding caused by serious injury, call for medical assistance immediately. There is little you can do to effectively control serious internal bleeding. Usually the victim needs immediate surgery to correct the problem. While waiting for help:

- 1 Prevent further injury.
- 2 Monitor the victim's airway, breathing and circulation, and respond if CPR procedures are known.
- 3 Help the victim to rest in the most comfortable position.
- 4 Maintain normal body temperature.
- 5 Reassure the victim.
- 6 Provide care for other specific conditions.

## **D Bush Fire Safety and Survival**

This article is taken from a publication of The Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority Rural Fire Service.

Bushfires in Australia have claimed many lives - lives so tragically lost under circumstances that may have been easily avoided by a simple understanding of what to do in a bushfire. Most bushfire victims should have suffered no more than a few minor burns, nose and throat irritation and perhaps a slight headache. Instead, some die because they have either panicked or ignored taking a few basic safety precautions. A fear of fire is probably the most widely spread phobia of the human race. The unexplainable panic that arises when people are, or imagine they are, in danger of being trapped by fire has led to the abandonment of common sense. Panic, in most cases, has led to individual and multiple deaths when comparative safety was near at hand.

To avoid such tragedies, everyone who lives in, or visits the grass and bush lands that make up such a large percentage of our country should make themselves familiar with a few simple facts about the dangers of bush and grass fires. They should be aware of the rules of conduct that may greatly multiply their chances of survival. Observe these three important rules when faced with a fire: always remain calm - don't panic; always protect yourself from radiant heat; and keep low and/or stay in cleared areas.

### **Radiated Heat**

Persons trapped in a fire experience heat effects from various sources, and each contributes to the risk of injury or death. Means of minimizing the effects of these individual sources of heat should be understood and applied if chances of survival are to be improved.

Radiated heat is the greatest killer. Only a small percentage of people who die in bushfires are, in fact, burnt to death. The majority collapse due to the effects of radiated heat before the flames actually reached them.

The temperature at the face of a low-intensity fire will be around 1000 degrees, and the heat level rises sharply as fire intensity increases. In a grass fire, a person would be subjected to the extreme radiated heat for about 30 seconds, but in high intensity bushfire, the danger period would be 3-4 minutes, or longer.

Protection from radiated heat is the major factor in survival in bushfires. No means of avoiding radiated heat should ever be rejected. At such times any idea of personal hygiene may have to be temporarily abandoned; rolling in the mud and slush of a pigsty may not be clean, but it is preferable to extensive skin grafts and perhaps fatal injuries from burns.

### **Wind-Borne Heat**

The main convection current rises above a fire, but air is heated as the wind blows the fire forward and this hot air has the effect of preheating objects in advance of the fire. The feeling of heat or strong smell of smoke in the air is an immediate indication that the fire is near and time to take safety precautions before the real emergency occurs.

Body temperature will rise wherever there is a tendency to panic. Mental coolness (no panic) means physical coolness and this is important. Vigorous activities also cause the body temperature to rise, therefore it is important to conserve energy by deliberately controlling your actions.

### **What To Do**

Being trapped by a bush or grass fire generally occurs under one of three circumstances: on foot, in a vehicle, or in a house or building.

When fire threatens or appears to threaten, there is no cause or reason for panic. It is essential for the person to remain calm and assess the position and situation in a logical manner. Certain measures can be taken to improve your chances before fire arrives. If on foot, employ one of the safety measures listed:

- Stay with companions. Don't worry others by disappearing. Don't wander off alone.
- Never try to escape from an approaching fire by running uphill. Fire travels faster uphill. It is always better to move across the face of a hill out of the way of a fire.
- Don't panic as this drains your energy and affects your thinking.
- Run only when absolutely necessary and only if your chances of escape are clear.
- Seek shelter in a creek, waterhole, dam, in-ground earth tank, muddy area, or swamp at the side away from the fire. Wet or plaster the exposed parts of the body with mud to keep it moist. Do not climb into elevated tanks as this water heats rapidly and collapse can occur within a few minutes. ( A person almost totally immersed in warm water 44C reaches a stage of collapse in approximately 3 minutes).
- If no water is available, take refuge behind a raised object (a rock, log, or tree stump) in a cleared area. A slight hollow in the ground is also sufficient in a bare area (e.g. wheel ruts).
- If there is no suitable safe location available, seek shelter in the barest area away from heavy quantities of fuel; cover exposed skin with dirt, or dust, or clothing, or any available protection; lie face downwards with boots towards the fire.

## **E Lightning**

Acknowledgement: This summary is based on extracts from an article by Professor M Darveniza, revised January 2008.

### **Before the Walk**

Consult the weather forecast for the region, and if a thunderstorm is expected, select a walk that can be completed before the onset of the storm.

### **During the Walk**

Whenever possible, keep a lookout for the development of thunderstorm clouds in the region. Once thunder can be heard, keep estimating the distance to the lightning activity by counting the time interval between seeing the lightning flash and hearing the thunder. The time-to-thunder provides an estimate of the distance to the lightning activity, e.g.:

- 3 seconds - 1 km
- 15 seconds - 5 km
- 30 seconds - 10 km

If there is a good line of sight to the thunderstorm, reasonable estimates of distance can be made up to 10 km.

### **When to Leave Exposed Locations and Seek Safer Shelter**

Data from lightning location systems show that the distance between successive lightning strikes from a single thunderstorm cell rarely exceeds about 10 km (time to-thunder 30 seconds). This suggests that you should get away from exposed situations whenever the time-to-thunder is less than 15 seconds. According to Standards (such as AS/NZS 1768:2007 "Lightning Protection"), you should avoid exposed situations in accordance with the "30/30" safety guideline. For an approaching storm, move to a safe place whenever the time-to-thunder is less than 30 seconds; when the storm is receding, stay in the safe place until 30 minutes have elapsed after the last thunder is heard.

### **What are Safe Locations?**

Safe places during thunderstorms are:

- inside a metal-skinned car or vehicle (preferably stationary - keep completely inside)
- inside a substantial building, but keep away from outside windows - do not handle appliances connected to outside electrical conductors, i.e. do not use a land-line telephone, a modem connected computer, a hand-operated electrical appliance or touch a TV or radio set particularly if connected to an outside aerial.

If the above locations are not readily accessible find a hollow or a low-level location away from tall trees, and crouch low, keeping your shoes on and your feet together. If in a group, don't crowd together.

### **What to Do If the Thunderstorm is Above You and Lightning Strikes are nearby**

(That is, the Time-To-Thunder is Less than 5 Seconds)

This might happen if you were not able to take the action suggested above, and this is quite possible if you are out on a walk involving distances of over 15 km. Now, all you can do is to minimize the risk of being struck by lightning. You should try to get away from the high ground if possible:

- Leave the top of a mountain range or ridge if you are on a range or ridge.
- Get away from the top edges of a cliff or an escarpment - lookouts are usually at such locations, so get away from lookouts.
- Keep away from large trees; particularly those located near a cliff edge or an escarpment.
- If you are in a forest, and so cannot avoid being near to trees:
- Choose to be near small trees rather than tall trees.
- Try and stay a distance of more than your height from the nearest tree trunk.
- If you are with a group of walkers, you should keep at least 5 metres apart.
- Do not walk in pairs or in closely packed groups when lightning strikes are all around you.
- If you have found a somewhat safer location (as above), it is better to stop walking, to stand in a crouched position keeping your feet together or sit with your feet tucked in close to your body. Wait until the thunderstorm cell has passed from your location (it should be safe to move again when the time-to-thunder exceeds 10 seconds).

### **What to Do if One of Your Party is Struck By Lightning**

It is most unlikely that a second lightning strike will occur immediately to the same spot. The total lightning discharge for a single strike only lasts a maximum of 1 to 2 seconds. So it is safe to touch an injured person immediately after the strike. You should begin first aid immediately.

- If there is no heartbeat and no breathing, give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to the victim and apply cardiac massage.
- If there is a heart beat but no breathing, mouth-to-mouth resuscitation only.
- Be prepared to continue the cardio-pulmonary resuscitation for a long time. Even if it is apparently unsuccessful, keep the CPR going until medical help arrives.
- Seek help as soon as possible, but only when it is safe to do so. It is obviously not wise to send some-one for help if that person has to move into or through a very exposed location.

## F PLB

PLB stands for Personal Locator Beacon. It is a smaller version of the EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon) carried on boats, and the ELT (Emergency Locator Transmitter) fitted to aircraft. In cases of emergency, it transmits a radio signal which is detected by satellites and aircraft to alert authorities to your distress and guide a rescue vehicle to your position. The system was designed for aircraft and boats, but it is also appropriate for bush walkers.

### Why use a PLB?

The advantages of using a PLB over other means of attracting a rescue are:

- # you don't have to wait very long. The signal is detected quickly and you may have paramedics with you in 60-90 minutes. In medical emergencies, speed of rescue can be important.
- # It is very cost effective. A PLB rescue avoids the expensive "search" phase because the satellites and helicopters can home in on the beacon.

### When to use a PLB

If a walker is unable to walk out, then a rescue is required. PLB activation may minimize delays in rescue. Walking groups should not hesitate to activate their PLB if an emergency arises.

Examples of situations where you can't walk out, you need to be rescued, and use of a PLB is appropriate follow:

- **Sprained ankle.** Although the medical attention required may be minimal, the patient cannot walk and must be evacuated to prevent life-threatening exposure.
- **Snake Bite.** The patient requires urgent medical attention, and should not walk.
- **(Suspected) heart attack.** The patient should not walk, and requires urgent medical attention.
- **Broken Bones.** If lower limbs are broken the patient requires medical attention and should not walk.
- **Party is Lost.** If you have become completely lost, then you can't walk out safely.
- **One party member is lost.** If you have lost a member of your party, you will need help with the search and rescue.
- **Flood-bound.** Sudden rising floodwaters may result in group isolation requiring rescue.

If you are reasonably sure that your party can walk out without assistance, then do so. These situations would probably not warrant calling in a rescue:

- **Car trouble.** You can walk 20km to find a phone and call RACQ. This may make you late home, but is not life-threatening.
- **Blisters.** Blisters can be uncomfortable, but are not life-threatening.
- **Late home.** If your party is late home, but safe and well, then you don't have an emergency.

### How to use a PLB

- If medical attention is required, activate it immediately. Don't wait for morning, don't wait for good weather and don't wait for the injury to heal or get worse. (If conditions are not good for a helicopter rescue, then emergency teams will be dispatched on foot, boat, ski-doo etc, as appropriate.)
- If the situation is not particularly urgent, such as a party lost but sufficient food and shelter for the night, then it may be best to activate the beacon in daylight.
- Carry your PLB instructions with your PLB. Read them.
- Being on a ridge is better than in a gorge. If it is easy to do so, then move the beacon to a place where plenty of sky is visible.
- Use your space blanket to amplify the signal. Spread the blanket on the ground, and place the PLB on top, with antenna pointing up.
- The PLB signal will work through forest canopy, but the pilot may have difficulty seeing you, and difficulty winching. A clear spot is preferable if it is easy to find.
- Make some other signals. (Remember how hard it is to see through the trees when you look down from a lookout.) A smoky fire can be seen and maybe even smelled by the air crew. At night, a fire may show up on infra-red detectors. Use flashing lights, mirrors, etc. A bright red or yellow rain coat or ground sheet may be easier to see. If you can see the aircraft, move so you are not under the leaves, and wave your arms (and hat and torch) in a large sweeping motion.
- Leave the PLB on. Leave it on when you see the aircraft. Leave it on at night. Leave it on until the rescuer tells you to turn it off.
- If you have a mobile phone, you might get some coverage at the top of the nearby ridge. Phone 000, and say
  - PLB activated
  - nature of emergency
  - your name
  - your location
  - Brisbane Bushwalkers Club Contact Officer phone number 07 3856 4050.
- If the phone is locked, or out of service range, you could try calling 112 instead of 000. This magic number is for all countries, on all networks, without needing a SIM card and without unlocking the phone. (Some phones don't support it, but it is worth a try.)

### How emergency services will respond to the PLB

The signal is first detected by satellites, and the information is relayed to the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, Canberra. (Commercial aircraft are also listening for the signal and will relay the information to Canberra.) The position given by the satellite is usually very accurate, because the PLB has determined its own position using the Global Positioning Satellite system, and transmitted the location information to the rescue satellite.

The PLB also transmits its serial number, which the authorities can use to determine the owner of the PLB. They will probably attempt some phone calls to the owner's registered telephone number to help rule out a false alarm.

The appropriate resources are dispatched to respond to the beacon. In the case of south-east Queensland bush, this will likely be Energex Community Rescue at Sunshine Coast, Queensland Rescue at Brisbane, or RACQ Careflight at Gold Coast. It is possible that other resources will be used, such as fixed wing aircraft, police, state emergency service walkers, Federation of Mountain Rescue, etc.

The helicopter may require 30 minutes before taking off to load the appropriate crew and equipment, and then 30 minutes to fly to the area. There could be a longer delay if the helicopter is already in use on another task.

The helicopter pilot will be given the position from Canberra, and will use an onboard homing system to find the beacon. This will take up to 15 minutes. (You can help by providing other visual signals.)

It is unlikely that the helicopter will land in the bush. It is more likely that a paramedic or Rescue Crew Officer will be winched to the ground.

Keep out of the way of the helicopter downdraft - it can break large branches which may fall and injure someone.

Have some bright clothing or space blanket to attract the pilots attention - it is difficult to see people from above, especially in dense forest cover.

The paramedic will be able to select the appropriate next step, which may involve winching the injured person to the aircraft.

At night, the pilot may decide not to conduct the rescue from the aircraft, but can still locate the beacon and co-ordinate a ground rescue.

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**Always Remember**

- read the trip description carefully, including the grade
- don't make plans for dinner - we don't guarantee home times
- be at the meeting place a little early
- stay with the group
- accept instructions from the leader
- act responsibly and safely
- thank the leader and driver

**Always Take**

- back pack
- thermals
- fleecy jacket
- raincoat
- first aid kit
- hat
- sunscreen
- water - at least 2 or 3 litres
- lunch - lots
- morning tea and snacks
- spare food
- torch
- whistle
- paper and pencil
- suitable footwear
- change of clothes and shoes for driving home
- money for car pooling and coffee
- membership card
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