



General safety information when undertaking Bushwalks

Whenever you visit a park, reserve or other remote area, you need to take precautions. Here are some tips to help you stay safe:

Planning your visit

[Contact the local National Parks office](#) to ask about local conditions, tracks, creek or river water levels and fire danger. Make sure you will have at least three people in your group with at least one experienced person in the group who can guide and assist others. Make sure your activity is something which all participants in your group are able to do. Before heading out, leave full details with a relative or responsible person of where you will be going, who is with you, what equipment you have, and when you expect to return. A "Trip intention form" is available for this purpose. Allow plenty of time to finish the activity in daylight, and pack extra food and water in case of unexpected delays. Weather can change rapidly, be prepared for heat, rain, thick mist, icy winds, sleet and snow.

Check prevailing and forecast conditions before heading out.

At the very least, make sure you have:

Matches, topographic map(s), compass, a space blanket, a first aid kit raincoats for everyone in the group, warm clothing for everyone in the group, plenty of water, ample food & torches.

In the park

Make sure you completely extinguish all fires before leaving an area or going to bed. A small amount of glowing embers can start a huge bushfire. Keep to tracks and stay behind safety fences. If you want to swim in rivers or lakes, check the water depth and temperature first.

Canyoning

Keep your group to a small and manageable size (4-8 people), avoid camping in canyon environments. Avoid canyoning if rain is forecast or if the weather looks changeable. Know the route, and have adequate food, safety and first aid gear, maps and clothing. Know how to swim and self-rescue on ropes. Teach beginner abseilers prior to canyon trips, rather than in canyons. Hypothermia is a real risk – wetsuits and spare warm clothes are advisable.

Cold Climate safety

Preparation

Never travel alone, know where you are going. If you're going into remote areas, take a topographic map and a compass and know how to use them. On any remote area trip, make sure every member of your group has:

Warm clothing, Tent, Sleeping bag, waterproof jacket with hood and waterproof overpants, warm hat & plenty of food and drink. The party should have a first aid kit, bivouac bag or space blanket.

Technology

Mobile phones have patchy coverage which can affect batteries. Even though you may not be able to make a call, in some cases text messages can still be sent

GPS (Global Positioning System) devices use a satellite network to provide you with your location. To be of real use, they must be used with topographic maps and a compass.

PLBs (Personal Locator Beacons) or EPIRBs (Emergency Position Indicating Response Beacons) are for an emergency situation only! They transmit a signal through a satellite network to the emergency centre in Canberra.

Technology will not guarantee your safety. Even if you set off a PLB in an emergency, poor weather may effect the use of aircraft and ground searchers may also be hampered.

If lost or injured

Stay where you are. If you're moving, you'll be harder to find and you will use valuable energy. Find a spot out of the wind and make a shelter. Leave something visible for searchers such as colourful clothing etc. If you're above the treeline, do not drop down into the trees except for shelter. Forest areas are dense & rugged, it is almost impossible for helicopters to see people on the ground.

Hypothermia

In cold and/or wet conditions inadequate clothing, tiredness and insufficient food can combine to cause a lowering of normal body temperature (hypothermia) which can, at its worst, result in collapse or death if untreated.

Hyperthermia

Overheating of the body temperature > 40 °C. Hyperthermia can lead to collapse and death, particularly in the elderly. In hot conditions ensure you do not over exert yourself, take rest breaks and consume ample water

(the above information has been reproduced courtesy of the National Parks & Wildlife Service. It is intended as an overview only. Persons intending to undertake activities of the type mentioned should refer to the National Parks & Wildlife website for further detail. www.environment.nsw.gov.au/nationalparks)