

Walking Club of Victoria Inc

**MEMBERS' GUIDEBOOK**



September 2012

This Guidebook has been prepared for the benefit of both new and experienced members.

The most up to date copy of the Members Guidebook will be available to members by viewing the Member's Only section of the club's website.

The Guidebook continues with the bringing together of the collective wisdom of the Club, to help us tread softly, safely and with confidence through our beloved bush, at the same time helping preserve this unique environment for those who come after us.

Walking Club of Victoria is a member of Bushwalking Victoria Inc.

<http://www.bushwalkingvictoria.org.au/>

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Communication

The Walking Club of Victoria (WCV) aims to keep members informed. The quarterly newsletter “Contour Lines” and the “Club Program” provides members with key contact details, interesting items and the programmed activity schedule.

The club website <http://www.walkingclubvic.org.au/> provides access to the most up to date versions of all the clubs guidebooks, forms, documents, and other information. The website will be the main means of communication (apart from Club Program and Contour Lines) between the club and members.

The web page also has links to other web sites of interest to bushwalkers. The WCV website has two sections, one for general public viewing and the other for member only viewing.

## 1.2 General Guidelines

- Any programmed club activity shall consist of a minimum of four and a maximum of thirty people on any day walk/ride, or twenty on a backpack weekend walk. Leaders may vary the maximum numbers depending on conditions.
- A participant with a medical or physical condition is required to disclose the nature of the disability to the leader when booking onto the walk. This information shall remain confidential. Participants must carry medication they may need on the activity.
- All participants must complete and carry the club Emergency Information form (available from the club website <http://www.walkingclubvic.org.au/> in the Members Only section under Leader Information) in a zip-top plastic envelope in an outside pocket of their pack.
- Non-members are required to complete and sign the club’s Temporary Member Activity Participation form and pay a fee to cover insurance costs. The form and fees will be collected by the leader before starting the activity. A schedule of fees is printed on the club’s Booking Form.
- Persons less than 18 years can participate in club activities if they are accompanied by an adult family member or legal guardian, responsible for his/her care. If the person is not a member, the Club’s Temporary Member Activity Participation form must be completed by the guardian before starting the activity.
- WCV will be guided by Bushwalking Victoria in their booklet “Walksafe”. A copy will be provided to each new member. The current edition is available via the website <http://www.bushwalkingvictoria.org.au> in the ‘Publications, Brochures’ section or by phoning Bushwalking Victoria Phone: 8846 4131.
- Walksafe includes current information on: bushcraft, clothing, equipment, food and water, first aid and first aid kits. It also contains survival tips for what to do in the event of becoming lost, coping with extreme weather events, heat, cold, major accident, snake bite as well as information on what to do in the case of bushfire or flood.
- All participants will carry a personal First Aid Kit. See Bushwalking Victoria’s publication Walksafe or <http://www.bushwalkingvictoria.org.au> for details.

- Participants on Bike Rides should ensure that their bike is suitable for the ride, must wear a helmet, wear a bright easily seen safety jacket or top and carry a spare tube, bike pump, and a basic repair kit.
- All activity participants must have their names recorded on the attendance list.
- IF A TOTAL FIRE BAN IS DECLARED FOR THE DISTRICT, THE ACTIVITY IS AUTOMATICALLY CANCELLED.
- INFORMAL WALKS/RIDES: The Club takes no responsibility for walks/rides that do not appear on the activities program.

## 2 Guidelines for Activities

The following guidelines have been compiled to assist walk participants in fulfilling their responsibilities.

### 2.1 Activity Grading

S Up to 12km

M 12 to 17 km

L Over 17Km

E Fire trails/tracks, beaches

B Bush tracks

R Some scrub or steep

\* Denotes recommended walks for beginners. Most walks will have two code letters to denote length and terrain, e.g. S/R under 14km. but with steep hills or scrub.

### 2.2 Booking Procedures

- Book in advance with the activity leader by telephone (BEFORE 9 PM PLEASE, Thursday for Sunday walks & Monday for Wednesday walks). If required to leave a message please ensure you leave your name, telephone number and the activity you are booking on. The leader will only return your call if more information is required or the activity is fully booked.
- Check with the leader the conditions that may be expected. I.e. type of terrain, steep hills, off track, distance etc.
- Carefully consider the grading of the activity and check with the leader that you qualify to undertake that particular activity. Do not forget to notify the leader privately of any medical condition, which may affect your ability to complete the activity.
- Confirm the meeting place, and time of departure.
- Advise the leader when booking if you require assistance with transport, tent accommodation, or with any equipment.

- If you are unable to attend a booked activity please inform the leader as soon as possible.
- For camps the club will have two booking dates. The first for members, the second, one month later for non-members who will be told when ringing to book that members have priority for the first month of bookings.

### **2.3 Leaders Authority**

The leader is responsible for the wellbeing of each member of the group. Leaders undertake activities on a voluntary basis, spending time and effort in organising these for the benefit of the participants. Try to help when possible, or when asked by the leader, and respect his or her decisions or directions.

A leader may decline a request to participate in an activity if they feel the participant is not suited to or adequately prepared for the activity. Any person refused attendance for any reason may appeal to the President. (see Walk Program information page for contact details).

### **2.4 Transport and Other Costs**

- The leader will try and fill cars to reduce the number of vehicles travelling to the start of the walk. Car owners are encouraged to take turns using their vehicles.
- The leader will describe to drivers the route the group will take to the start of the activity, including, if necessary, a regrouping point to enable a car count to be made before moving on to the start of the activity.
- For day activities the leader will inform participants of the trip costs. Check current Walk program for mileage cost.
- On weekend and overnight walks the fuel costs are shared by passengers. The driver supplies the use of the vehicle and works out the fuel cost.
- Club policy expects that participants of trips will cover all the costs including accommodation, transport, leader expenses, hire etc. Costs will be shared among the participants.

### **2.5 At the Start of the Activity**

The following general conditions apply to all activities

- All walkers/riders must check in with the leader. Temporary members must complete the Temporary Member Activity Participation form and pay the temporary members fee when checking in.
- Leaders are not required to wait for latecomers past the published start time but may at their discretion, elect to wait up to a maximum of 10 minutes.
- During the introductory circle, the leader will make announcements regarding activity details, route, and other club information, appoint a whip and explain the whistle code to walkers.

- Whistle code for walkers (all walkers should carry a whistle):
  - ONE LONG blast Acknowledge in reply.
  - TWO SHORT blasts Stop and re-group with leader.
  - THREE blasts EMERGENCY, re-group immediately.
- The whip's duties are to ensure that no one drops back behind them, and to assist and encourage slower participants. The whip will inform the leader of any concerns.

## **2.6 Participants Responsibilities during the Activity**

- Observe and respect the leader's directions and requests during the activity.
- At track/road junctions, stop and regroup until the leader indicates which way to go.
- Do not leave the group without notifying the leader or the whip of your intentions. Leave your pack in clear view at the side of the track/road to show where you left the group.
- Each person should frequently check to ensure that anyone behind is in visual range. If the person behind drops out of sight, relay message to front walkers/riders to stop and regroup.
- Be aware of your companions' condition. Notify the leader if you notice anyone under stress or in difficulty, particularly in adverse weather conditions.
- Participants should be aware of the walkers responsibilities outlined in BWV Walksafe under the bushcraft and camping sections.
- Should an emergency situation arise at any time through illness, injury, unfavourable terrain, adverse weather conditions, etc. offer assistance to the leader if you can help.

## **3 Club Insurance**

Bushwalking Victoria arranges Public Liability insurance and Personal Accident insurance for all members of affiliated clubs and subject to certain conditions, for individual members.

All club members are also required to sign an Acknowledgement of Risk at least each year, at the time of renewing their membership. All temporary members (Visitors) are required to sign a Visitors Acknowledge Risks Form prior to participating in an activity.

All questions about insurance are to be directed to the Secretary (Listed under the Office Bearers section of Club Program).

- Insurance for authorised club activities is provided from your annual club or Visitors fees.
- If your fees are overdue you may not be insured.
- Insurance covers authorised activities in Australia and New Zealand.
- If you are injured during an authorised club activity, notify the leader immediately.
- The activity leader will notify the club Secretary within 24 hours of the completion of the activity.

- If an incident/action by a club member may have exposed you, or other members of the party and/or a third party, to risk of injury, damage to property, for which the club could be accountable or which could result in an insurance claim against the club inform the leader or alternatively contact the secretary within 24 hours with the detail.

## 4 Bushfire Precautions

### 4.1 Total Fire Ban Days

On days of Total Fire Ban in a Fire Ban District, all WCV day activities in that district will automatically be cancelled. For weekend, extended walks and base camps in progress, comply with leader's instructions. If the Total Fire Ban is on Day One, then the start must be delayed or the activity cancelled.

Further information on Bushfires can be found at:

- The CFA web site <http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au> ,
- Department of Sustainability and Environment  
<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/fire-and-other-emergencies/fires-today-incident-summary>
- Victorian Bushfire Information Line (VBIL) 1800 240 667

### 4.2 Victorian Fire Districts

A detailed map is available on the CFA web site <http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au> . Before starting an activity on a day of High Risk, leaders will ring the Bushfire Information Line 1800 240 667 to find out about the weather conditions in the district. Leaders will check to see if any fuel reduction burns are planned.

## 5 Risk Management

Risk Management is simply the practice of systematically identifying and understanding the risks and implementing controls to manage the risks. Ultimately, the process gets you to a point of deciding whether, in the context of a particular activity or function, a risk is acceptable or requires further action.

The Risk Management process does not encourage members to be risk averse. In fact, it is designed to provide members with a degree of confidence to be able to manage risk to an acceptable level.

Risk Management is not about getting as much insurance coverage as possible or about just avoiding legal action.

To view the club's Risk Management Policy, visit the club website  
<http://www.walkingclubvic.org.au/>

## **6 Code of conduct**

WCV has implemented a code of conduct for members that is based on the principle of mutual respect.

Members are encouraged to be inclusive of every person irrespective of their age, gender or sexual orientation, race, religious beliefs or culture. Harassment, abusive behaviour or violence are all disrespectful behaviours which can lead to serious sanctions including expulsion as a member of WCV.

Complaints under the code of conduct are managed by the President who reports the outcomes of any complaint to the Committee for endorsing the resolution of the complaint or any sanctions against the offending member.

To view the club's Code of Conduct visit the club website <http://www.walkingclubvic.org.au/>

## **7 Information and other Resources**

The Club has a comprehensive library of information of general interest to members.

### **7.1 Leaders Guidebook**

A "Leader's Guidebook" will be issued to all leaders.

### **7.2 Walks Library**

A list of maps is available on the web site <http://www.walkingclubvic.org.au/>

The Librarian maintains this list. See Club Program under Office Bearers.

### **7.3 Books in the Library**

The club's website <http://www.walkingclubvic.org.au/> has a list of books that can be borrowed for one month. The Library operates at Club Meetings. Contact the club Librarian (as listed in Club Program) to ensure item is available for collection at the meeting.

### **7.4 Equipment for Hire**

The club does not currently offer equipment for hire. If you wish to hire equipment contact a committee member who can direct you to bushwalking equipment hire companies.

### **7.5 Group First Aid Kit**

Members are responsible for maintaining and carrying their own First Aid Kit.

### **7.6 Training Courses**

Training courses are run periodically to assist members in their bushcraft skills. These include:

- Leader training.

- First Aid.
- Global Positioning System (GPS) usage.
- Navigation.

Contact the club secretary if you are interested in attending any of these courses.

## **8 Search and Rescue**

Bush Search and Rescue Victoria (BSAR) is a dedicated volunteer search and rescue group and is a division of Bushwalking Victoria Inc. BSAR participates in land-based search and rescue activities for persons lost in the bush in conjunction with and under direction from the Victoria Police Search and Rescue Squad.

Bushwalkers, ski tourers and other outdoors people, experienced and comfortable in a bush environment, are always needed for this role.

WCV has a Search and Rescue member, who can be called out to assist on a search when needed.

If members wish to join they can contact the Search and Rescue club member listed on the club program for initial information.