

HIKE SAFETY

General Safety

- Make sure someone trustworthy knows where you are going, the route you are following and your expected timetable. Inform them when you get back.
- Don't walk alone.
- The minimum group size should be 4.
- Have a safety plan. What to do in the event of fire or injury.

Safety equipment

- Carry a compass (and know how to use it).
- Carry a whistle. A whistle can be heard much further away than a shout.
- Know how to find direction at day and night from the sun and stars.
- Personal First Aid kit.
- Torch (at night).
- Mobile phone (CDMA has a better coverage in the bush).

To avoid becoming separated from your patrol

- Walk with a buddy – always know where your buddy is.
- Always keep the person behind you in sight.
- Wait every 20 minutes for everyone to catch up.
- Wait at every major crossing for everyone to catch up.

If you become separated

- Don't panic
- Try to return to the point you last saw your buddy/patrol – about 20 minutes. If you don't know which direction that is stay where you are.
- Stay where you are and make a lot of noise, preferably with a whistle – about 1 hour.
- As a last resort follow your safety direction, preferably with your compass – this will usually bring you to a road. At the road WAIT for someone you know to pick you up – remember 'Stranger Danger' still applies.

Walking with traffic

- On a road walk in single file at the edge of the road facing the oncoming traffic (walk on the right).
- Keep the group together – about 2m between walkers.
- Have a lookout at either end. If a car is coming their job is to alert the rest of the patrol "car coming".
- When a car is passing move over as far as you can – off the road if possible.
- At night the lookouts need to carry torches. When a car is coming from their end they should flick the torch up at the oncoming car to attract the drivers attention then point the torch back at themselves and shine it along the hikers. At night car drivers are watching for lights NOT pedestrians.

In the event of injuries

What you do will depend heavily on circumstances. But keep the following principles in mind.

- If it is possible continue along your route and follow the original plan – that's where you will be looked for if you're believed to be lost.
- If the injured person can't go any further
 - Make him comfortable.
 - Don't move him.
 - Don't leave him alone.
 - Reassure him.
- Don't try to carry the injured person out.
- If at all possible don't split the group.
- Make sure you can direct someone back to the injured person.
 - Mark it on your route map
 - Note your GPS coordinates and write them down.
 - Note local landmarks and write them down.
- If you must split the group never split into less than two's – if you have four people one should stay with the injured person whilst the other two go for help.
- Possessions can be replaced. If you're going for help dump what you don't need you'll travel faster if you're lighter. But don't run – that increases risks to you – remember DRABC 'D' is danger to you or the injured party.