

WALKING - LEADERS OF BUSH-WALKING

THE BUSH WALKING GROUP:

1. The minimum number for safety is four.
2. In the event of an accident/emergency one person can stay with the injured person, whilst two go for help. Leaders should regularly do a head count, which becomes more difficult as the spread of the group increases with the number. For U3A Bendigo walks 20 is probably a sensible maximum.
3. Walkers should be instructed to stop at track junctions and walk on the right-hand side of the road where there is no footpath. Try leading from the middle, nominate someone to go in front while navigation is easy as the Leader monitors how others are going within the group.
4. The Leader is responsible for the whole group and if the group is split a Leader for each sub-group must be given detailed instructions.
5. The Leader should announce a break, every 1 to 1^{1/2} hours. It is also a good time for the Leader to check with the tail-enders and see how they are coping.

PLANNING:

6. Your Convenor has maps and records of past walks by the group which can be used. Some of these may already be regularly repeated by current members. Other walks may now be available because they were led by members who have now retired from the group.
7. Local tourist offices usually have guides for a range of local walks and the websites of Parks Victoria and the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) have notes and maps on National and Regional Parks and State Forests.
8. Vicmap (online) has local topographic maps available in 1:25000 and 1:50000 series although the information used in the former is over 30 years old and the scale of the latter is of less use for bushwalking.
9. The Bendigo Library has an extensive collection of bushwalking books.
10. Google Earth is useful in planning, as is the Department of Environment and Primary Industry's (DEPI's) Forest Explorer. It can be used to print maps of tracks within National and State parks. The CFA's *Planned burns* can be consulted to avoid areas to be burned, and also areas which have been burned in recent years.

Note: Maps can be bought at DEPI, Epsom, or online.

RECONNAISSANCE:

11. If you are not familiar with an area a reconnaissance is recommended. Take at least one person with you and your map, and walk over the ground. It is good to also check features such as space for car parking, access tracks, toilets and locations for lunch.

NAVIGATION:

12. During the walk ensure you carry the map with you. Where on the map was that track junction you just passed? How far is it to the next feature you should see? Will you cross a creek first? Do the contours show hills or gullies on either side of you?
13. You should carry a compass and use it to check that the track being walked is in the direction shown on your map. A mobile phone or iPad can also be used to check that you are walking in line with your map.

Note: An advantage of a bushwalking book is the *track notes* it contains, interpret the map for you.

EMERGENCY:

14. In the case of a serious injury it may be impractical to carry the injured person any distance. A mobile phone or a Personal Locator Beacon to call for assistance is invaluable.

Note: for an emergency call on your mobile phone, first try triple zero, or if out of range try 112 which will connect to any available server.

15. If a Total Fire Ban or Code Red is declared in the area of the proposed walk then it will be cancelled or postponed. If you would still like to walk then meet at the advertised meeting place and arrange a walk within town to finish before the heat of the day.

GRADING YOUR WALK:

16. Doing this consistently enables people to self-assess whether they are fit enough to come on a walk. Walks should be graded **easy**, **medium** or **hard**, using a combination of:

- distance;
- surface (eg Smoother, loose gravel);
- topography (eg. Flat, undulating, hilly) and
- where significant – Ascent/descent (eg 300 metre ascent).

DURATION OF WALK:

17. As a guide (excluding time for lunch) allow one hour for every:

- 4.0km on a smooth flat track;
- 3.0km on a rough undulating track;

Add an extra hour for:

- 250m ascent;
- 500m descent.

FUEL SHARE:

18. Passengers in a car should bear the full cost of the fuel used (by estimation or by filling up at the end of the trip), since the driver is bearing the other costs. Therefore, it is best to minimise the number of vehicles and maximise the number of people (usually 3) per car.

19. As far as possible, the use of vehicle should be spread around amongst members from week to week.

Authorisation:

These Guidelines were adopted by the Committee Of Management of U3A Bendigo Incorporated, and minuted as such, on **3rd December 2018**.