“Let someone know when you go”

Always leave a trip intention form with someone who can raise the alarm.

The following information is only an overview and should be a starting point for any person wishing to enjoy a safe wilderness experience. Please consider these points for yourself and each person in your group.

**Before entering a wilderness environment**

**Plan your trip –** Research your trip using a current map and advice from experience walkers and local land managers, such as Parks Victoria and Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).

Understand the environment you are entering, and risks associated with it. Emergency response and rescue can take time. Always have an emergency plan factored into your trip.

For more information, visit:

* Parks Victoria (13 19 63) [www.parks.vic.gov.au](https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/)
* Bureau of Meteorology – [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)
* Snowsafe – [www.snowsafe.org.au](http://www.snowsafe.org.au)
* Bushwalking information – [www.bushwalkingvictoria.org.au](http://www.bushwalkingvictoria.org.au)
* Visit Victoria (trip suggestions) – [www.visitvictoria.com](http://www.visitvictoria.com)
* Four Wheel Drive Victoria – [www.4wdvictoria.org.au](https://www.4wdvictoria.org.au/)
* Vic Emergency – [www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au).

**Know limitations of each person in the group** – Consider all physical and medical needs, experience or inexperience, and skills required for the area. Age is also very important. Travel within your ability and knowledge of the area.

**Have a trip intention plan** – Leave it with a reliable person. Notify that person if you change your plans. Fill out trip intentions/logbooks in huts or at check points during your journey if they are available.

**Weather** – Always check a current and forecasted weather report but do not rely on it, plan for worst-case scenario by carrying extra food, water, clothing and equipment. Weather can change very quickly. Download phone apps such as Weatherzone, Willyweather and BOM and check them regularly.

**Water** – Always carry sufficient water on both day and overnight trips. Carry more water than you’ll need and plan for emergencies. Stay hydrated and do not rely on creeks unless you have reliable information.

**Food** – Carry sufficient food for your trip, and pack extra in case of emergencies.

**Clothing** – Dress for the conditions, bring extra and have wet weather clothing available. Always have enough to cover you for the worst-case scenario. Weather conditions in wilderness environments are sometimes unpredictable. Re-check weather forecast throughout your trip.

**Equipment** – **Always have a map and compass and know how to use them**. GPS and mobile phones help but they do not replace experience. Bushwalking clubs are a good way to advance your experience and knowledge. Carry spare batteries or a portable charging pack.

**Logbooks** –Many popular walking track starting points, huts and some campsites have logbooks. Make a note in the logbook of the time/date, your group and intended destination that day or multi-days. Include any relevant information that may benefit other groups. Read previous entries in any logbook, to have an idea of the location of other groups or relevant information they may have shared. Logbooks will be reviewed by emergency services in the event of an incident or missing person/group in that area.

**Mobile phone** –Keep your phone turned off when it’s not needed. A mobile phone outside of range will continue to search for a signal, quickly using up the battery. Also turn off the Wi-Fi and Bluetooth settings.

* Keep it dry and warm. Store your phone in a waterproof pouch or buy a waterproof phone.
* You can often get reception from high ground. If you don't have reception, walk to a high point.
* SMS messages use much less power than calling; if your battery is low, send information via SMS.
* The GPS in your phone relies on the mobile network to render maps, while some phones have maps stored inside them. Most of these maps are not ideal for bushwalking as they lack detail, so it is advised to download Outdoor Apps such as More to Explore, MotionX-GPS, AllTrails, Memory-Map, and Coordinates.Learn how to use them and know how to access your current GPS location.
* Download the “Emergency+” app. This gives your GPS location immediately and will allow you to contact emergency services directly from the app. Ensure your location services and mobile data is turned on.

## Suggested equipment list

* Suitable backpack
* Map (current) and compass
* GPS (with extra batteries) - learn how to use it before leaving on your trip
* Headlamp with spare batteries
* Whistle and pocketknife
* Correct clothing – seek advice from outdoor stores or bushwalking clubs.
* Extra clothing
* Food and water
* Hat, sunglasses and sunscreen
* Correct footwear, worn in before long bushwalks
* Waterproof matches and container
* Candle and fire starter
* First Aid kit (individual and group)
* Tent or bivvy bag
* Large rubbish bag for emergency shelter and keeping equipment dry in you pack
* Notebook and pencil
* Mobile phone (be aware it will not always have coverage)
* Emergency Locator Beacon such as EPIRB, PLB, SPOT, In-Reach ([www.beacons.amsa.gov.au](https://www.beacons.amsa.gov.au/))
* Sense of adventure – but know your limitations.

# Common factors which contribute to persons being lost

#### (There is usually a combination of the below factors which result in problems occurring)

* **Planning,** lack of planning or no planning for a trip.
* **Terrain** and hazards such as cliffs or rivers, overgrown tracks or poor signage.
* **Weather**, poor weather in area of search, hypothermia or hyperthermia.
* **Equipment,** poor equipment, failure of equipment or inappropriate equipment for area.
* **Ability,** overconfident, or skill ability not proven for particular terrain.
* **Decision-making,** lack of leadership within party leading to poor decisions. Once lost walking in one direction, believing you will come across civilisation eventually.
* **Fatigue**, leading to poor decisions or injury.
* **Physical ability**, poor physical condition, pre-existing injuries or illness.
* **Lack of food or water**, contributing to fatigue and poor decision-making.
* **Medical,** pre-existing or accident during trip.
* **Technology,** over reliance in technology e.g, GPS flat batteries or mobile phones with no coverage.
* **Underestimating route**, causing delay and/or unable to identify terrain hazards.
* **No map or compass**, contributing to disorientation.

##### What to do if you get lost

* Stop and think. Stay calm. Re-check navigation and map.
* Re-track steps a short distance may assist. Locate your last known point if possible
* Gain some height for orientation. If the above does not help **stay where you are**.
* Attempt to make your position visible to searchers on land and in the air. For example, use fire or bright clothing in open areas that can be seen by air searches.
* If you are in a group, stay together, never separate. Find shelter stay warm and dry.
* Be aware it can take a considerable time for rescuers to reach you, so your priority is to remain warm and dry, ration your food and water if necessary.

**If you are lost or require help call Triple Zero (000).**

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| **This form could save your life.**  **Fill it out before you leave home and always leave it with someone reliable.** |

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| **How to use this form**  Complete the relevant details on this form and leave it with a reliable friend, family member or responsible authority. The contact person you nominate will raise the alarm if you haven’t returned and/or contacted them by the time indicated on the form. |

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| **Reporting person** | |
| **Name** | **Street address** |
| **Telephone/s** | **Role (organiser, professional staff, group leader, instructor)** |
| **Social media accounts / usernames** | |
| Don’t forget - the reporting person **must** notify the contact person as soon as possible on return, or if delayed. | |

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| **Contact Person** | | |
| **Name** | **Street Address** | |
| **Telephone/s** | **Nominated search and rescue notification**  **Time/date (if applicable)** |  |
| Note - Police will not initiate a search unless notified by the contact person. | | |

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| **Activity** | | |
| Bushwalking | SCUBA diving | Climbing / rappelling |
| Flying | Angling | Hunting |
| Boating | Photography | Prospecting |
| Kayaking | Four Wheel Driving | Cross country skiing |
| Canoeing | Trail bike | Backcountry skiing/snowboarding |
| Rafting | Mountain biking | Other …………………… (Specify) |

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| **Others with me are…** | | | |
| 1 | **Contact telephone/s** | Passenger  Participant | Professional  Staff / leader |
| 2 | **Contact telephone/s** | Passenger  Participant | Professional  Staff / leader |
| 3 | **Contact telephone/s** | Passenger  Participant | Professional  Staff / leader |
| 4 | **Contact telephone/s** | Passenger  Participant | Professional  Staff / leader |
| For extra names use an additional form or attachment. Remember medical considerations, allergies, recent/current illness, medication, dose, quantity on hand, duration, result without, student medical plan, etc. | | | |

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| **Trip intentions**  Indicated map used and camp references will assist potential searchers. | |
| **Day 1 (date)** | **Attach map and further details if applicable** |
| **Day 2** |  |
| **Day 3** |  |
| **Day 4** |  |
| **Day 5** |  |
| Consider escape plans. Indicate whether planned school activity, outdoor recreational activity or other. | |

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| **Vehicle/trailer/aircraft/vessel description…** | | | |
| Make/model | | Registration number/s | |
| Left at (location) | |  | |
| Vessel length | Hull colour | Deck colour |  |
| Engine size | Diesel  Petrol | Inboard  Outboard | Single  Twin |
| Boat name | | | |

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| **Equipment carried** | | | |
| Wet weather gear (jacket and over pants) | Tent/emergency shelter | Radio  27Mhz / VHF / HF | Flares carried |
| Spare warm dry clothing | Matches (waterproof) | Mobile phone carrier (Optus/Telstra etc) | Torch / strobe |
| Suitable footwear | Map / chart and compass | Satellite phone | Life raft |
| Food/Provisions  (for…………..days) | GPS | 406 Mhz Distress Beacon (EPIRB / PLB) | Life Jackets |
| Water | First Aid Kit | SPOT device or similar | Whistle |

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| Police will not act as initial contact person. |
| **Important safety tips**   * Navigation skills are important; know how to use a map/chart and compass. * Remember, it can snow in the mountains even in summer, so be prepared. * Check the weather report and ensure it is suitable for the safe conduct of your chosen activity. * Ensure you have sufficient fuel and reserves. * Lifejackets save lives. * Only 406 MHz Distress Beacons will be detected by satellite – GPS chipped are more accurate. |

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| **Useful websites** | |
| [www.bushwalkingvictoria.org.au](http://www.bushwalkingvictoria.org.au)  [www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au/maritime-safety](http://www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au/maritime-safety)  [www.amsa.gov.au](http://www.amsa.gov.au)  [www.4wdvictoria.org.au](https://www.4wdvictoria.org.au/)  [www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au) | [www.bsar.org](https://www.bsar.org/)  [www.snowsafe.org.au](http://www.snowsafe.org.au)  [www.parks.vic.gov.au](https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/)  [www.tripintentions.org](http://www.tripintentions.org)  [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au) |

**ENJOY YOUR TRIP BUT DO IT SAFELY.**

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| **For all incidents requiring search and rescue assistance in Victoria, call 000 immediately.** |