

Wanderers Bushwalking and Outdoors Club Inc.



Leading Activities

A guide for new and existing leaders

Activity leaders are the Club's most valuable resource. Without them there would be no Club and so you, as a leader, are making the single biggest contribution to the Club's success that any member can make. This is something about which you can feel proud. Remember, although you are leading people on your activity, you are doing this as a volunteer and when you lead an activity you have the right to assume that each person on your activity, by signing the Activity Registration Sheet, assumes responsibility for their own health and safety.

Leading a walk is a rewarding activity and you don't need to be an expert from day one. There is always the opportunity to familiarise and to continue to learn the necessary skills over time from more experienced leaders who have developed their own style of leading. It can be as simple as using common sense and connecting with the group you are leading.

Useful information about [leading](#) and [planning](#) bushwalking activities can be found in the [Bushwalking Manual published by Bushwalking Victoria](#).

Planning an activity

1. Choose an area and activity that is well within your capabilities as a leader. If you have any doubts you should discuss these with the Activity Coordinator.
2. I will advise the activity coordinator if I am taking any medication or have any physical or other limitation that might affect my ability to lead the activity. Having a co-leader would significantly reduce the risks associated situations where the leader is unable to guide the group.
3. If you need ideas for activities, you can talk to other leaders, refer to the past Activity Programs, or the resources in Appendix 2.
4. If you are new to leading, you may want to consider:
 - reasonably straightforward activities. Members may be reluctant to go on more adventurous activities with a new leader until they know them better and a level of trust has been established; or
 - co-leading the activity with an experienced leader; and
 - contacting the activity coordinator to help identify an appropriate activity or for other assistance.

5. Pre-walk the route if possible and identify hazards and assess risks. Look for good morning tea and lunch spots. Leaders are encouraged to inform the Club of any pre-walk activity by emailing wanderersbushwalking+pre-walk@gmail.com before the pre-walk with the following information: leaders name; date of pre-walk; location and approximate route; participants names, phone numbers and emergency contact numbers. Non-club members on a pre-walk must sign a Risk Acknowledgement form. Refer to the minimum participants policy . If Pre-walks meeting these conditions are covered by our public liability insurance. If a significant incident or accident occurs on your pre-walk, an Incident Report Form should be completed as for any other Club activity. Remember to keep a copy for your own records.
6. [Complete the Activity Submission Form \(click on this text\)](#). If you are having trouble with the form contact the Activity Coordinator via mailto:wanderersbushwalking+activities@gmail.com. Ensure that you describe the walk clearly, identifying potential hazards. State any limits on numbers; booking deadlines and/or activity costs. For walks and cycles the grade (1–6) and approximate kilometres are required. See Appendix 3 - Grading Guide to determine the grade for walks. When you successfully submit the electronic form you will receive an email containing the information you submitted.
7. Control and manage risks. Try and have an alternate plan in case of unforeseen circumstances. e.g. flash flooding, track erosion, transport changes etc.
8. Leave comprehensive details of the walk with a reliable person including instructions on what to do if you do not return at the expected time (Refer to the Wanderers Emergency Contact Procedure).
9. A few days prior to your walk check transport details, expected weather conditions and fire conditions (see Rural Fire Service website for fire information, including controlled burns), park closures etc. Walks should be altered or cancelled if conditions are unsafe or parks are closed.
10. For Grade 3 and above walks without mobile phone coverage consider whether it is appropriate to carry a PLB and for at least one person other than leader to carry a map or GPS device.
11. If using public transport check connections to and from the activity. Make sure you allow sufficient time for connections if multiple forms of transport are used.

Activity Participation

1. Members are to contact the leader before attending any activity.
2. Prospective members without prior bushwalking experience are advised to commence with a grade 1 or grade 2 walk or an easier grade 3 walk (N.B. the leader will decide whether they are prepared to accept prospective members on their activity).
3. A visitor/guest becomes a temporary member for the duration of the activity. They may take part in walks only if invited by a full member (who must be present on the activity) and subject to the leader's prior

approval. Approval should be requested by the full or life member, not the visitor/guest.

4. Persons under 18 years of age cannot participate in a Wanderers led activity.
5. The visitor/guest cannot participate in an activity unless they read and complete the Acknowledgement of Risks and Obligations and Activity Sign-on forms before the commencement of the activity.
6. The leader has the right to refuse participation to any persons they consider may present a risk to themselves or other participants.

Conditions for holding an activity

1. To be covered by insurance all activities must appear in the Wanderers Activity Program or be emailed to members as a short notice activity by the club's Activity Coordinator.
2. Refer to Appendix 1 -Activities Policies for details of the minimum participants needed to conduct an activity.

Cancelling activities in extreme weather conditions

1. Leaders should always check expected weather conditions for their walk the day before, preferably after 5 pm when the most up-to-date information will be available.
2. Even with this preparation, conditions on the ground can be different from those predicted, so be prepared to adapt your plans, remembering that the safety and welfare of your group must always be your first priority when making decisions about the walk.
3. Risks you might be comfortable taking as an individual may not be acceptable if you are leading a Wanderers walk.
4. Leaders should not enter a National Park if it is closed, or take the group along any closed track unless they have specific permission to do so from the responsible authority.
5. A walk should not go ahead in a bushfire prone area on a Total Fire Ban day or when a severe, extreme or catastrophic fire warning rating has been issued.
6. Heat stress or heat exhaustion are real risks. Leaders should consider cancelling or modifying a walk when the temperature is predicted to exceed 30 degrees. Whether it is wise to go ahead will depend on factors such as the level of heat and humidity, the nature of the walk, and the availability of shade and exit points.
7. The Club will always support your decision as leader if you decide to cancel or change a walk because you consider it unwise to proceed.
8. You may be able to offer an alternative walk or activity. While this will be much appreciated, you are under no obligation to do so.

On the day of the walk (activity)

1. Ensure that you carry whatever equipment is required. Leaders must carry a suitable first aid kit and where possible a fully charged mobile phone. Other items could include compass, map, track notes, pen and whistle. Remember to pack the Activity Sign-on form for Members, Acknowledgement of Risks and Obligations forms for Temporary Members and a blank Incident Report Form. Copies can be downloaded from the Wanderers website (<https://bushwalkingnsw.org.au/clubsites/wanderers/forms.html>).
2. Check the latest weather forecast.
3. Get to the meeting point early.
4. All participants, including members and Temporary Members, must fill in the details on the appropriate Attendance Sheet and sign it. Check that emergency contact details are provided by everyone. This number is for someone who can be contacted in case of an emergency involving the person concerned. Add any additional risks not already listed in the space provided on the form.
5. If your walk is outside urban areas, and you do not carry a mobile phone yourself, you should ensure someone in your group is carrying one.
6. There must be the minimum number of participants as defined in Appendix 1 -Activities Policies. Unless these conditions are met, the walk will not be regarded as an authorised Club walk, and so will not be covered by the Club's public liability insurance.
7. Ensure everyone has adequate food and water: generally a minimum of one litre for a day walk or two litres or more in hotter conditions is recommended. People will need to carry more than this if there are no taps on the walk. In hot weather it is a good idea to carry an electrolyte replacer as well. For more on the importance of adequate liquids, see the 'Hydration' factsheet available on the Australian Institute of Sport website: www.ausport.gov.au/ais/nutrition.
8. Choose a place to form a circle that will not inconvenience other people and is quiet enough for you to be heard. Welcome everyone and ask everyone to introduce themselves and 'number off', ensuring the numbers counted match the number on the completed Sign-on Sheet. Make sure to extend a special welcome to prospective members and guests.
9. During the circle, give details of the activity. People like to have information on expected terrain, possible hazards, and whether there will be toilets and water available. You do not have to provide a completion time for a walk as they can sometimes take much longer than expected;
10. Appoint a tail unless this is obviously not necessary. Either prearrange with a fellow walker or ask for a volunteer. Preferably it should be someone who knows the route, or at least has some experience of the area;
11. Set your ground rules clearly. For example that walkers must walk behind the leader and ahead of the tail at all times. They must also do their best to keep sight of the walkers in front and behind them. Check

that first time or inexperienced members and visitors are wearing suitable footwear, using a backpack and carrying food and water. The leader has the right to refuse the participation of anyone they consider may present a risk to themselves or to the group. Ask them to let you know if they are having trouble keeping up or lose sight of the person behind them. If your walk includes pavements and shared cycle paths, remind the group of the importance of considering other users and not blocking their way.

12. Instruct participants who need to leave the track for a few minutes to let the tail know and to leave their packs on the track.

During the walk (activity)

1. Wait at track junctions, or appoint another walker to wait, to ensure everybody goes the right way;
2. On shared paths, continue to ensure your group remains aware of the rights of other people using the same space;
3. Give warning of any hazards encountered (low branch, slippery area, car approaching) as the walk progresses;
4. Carry out regular head counts to ensure you have everyone, especially after rest breaks and toilet stops;
5. Have regular drink and rest breaks. People often need to be reminded to drink in all weather conditions but especially when it is hot and/or humid;
6. Look back frequently to make sure the tail is in sight and if necessary wait for them to catch up. This will give you a good idea of the pace of the walk, which is necessarily set by the slowest walker. Don't take off as soon as the tail arrives. Slower or less fit walkers will need time to catch their breath and have a drink. Be aware of anyone who is struggling, and take appropriate action. Request that walkers make sure that they can see the person behind them and, if they can't, to alert the leader so that the group can wait for them to catch up;
7. When you stop for morning tea and lunch advise people how long you will be stopping and then give about five minutes warning before you head off again;
8. Finish the walk in a suitable spot. The Wanderers traditionally have afternoon tea at the end of a walk. Don't forget to thank those who have acted as tail and the drivers if car pooling;
9. If car pooling, ensure that all of the vehicles have commenced their journey to the car pooling meeting place.

Accidents or injuries during the walk (activity)

1. Halt the walk while you assess the situation. Let the rest of the group know what is happening. If the party needs to be split (e.g. to allow an injured member to walk out slowly), appoint a leader for each group.

2. While each walker is advised to carry their own first aid kit, it is important that you make sure you are well equipped in case someone forgets supplies.
3. The role of the leader is that of a manager rather than a first aid expert. Ask the person in the group with the most first aid experience or current qualifications to carry out first aid with your support.
4. Administer first aid as soon as possible.
5. If necessary, use a mobile phone to call for assistance. Dial 000 in any emergency situation. An app, 'Emergency+', is available for iPhones and Android phones from the iStore and Google App store, respectively. It provides GPS co-ordinates for your location, plus direct links to emergency services. If there is no mobile phone reception in emergency situations and you have a PLB then activate it and wait for assistance to arrive (this may take many hours).
6. In the event of a significant incident or injury, complete an Incident Report Form and return it to the Secretary as soon as practical, with a copy for your own records. In the event of serious injury, or if the injured participant indicates a wish to take matters further, inform the Secretary by phone or email as soon as possible.
7. Contact the injured/ill participant after the walk to check on his/her health.

After the walk (activity)

1. If you have left details of your walk with someone in case of emergency (see above), remember to let that person know as soon as the group has returned.
2. Write a short report about the activity and convey this and the Sign-on sheet to the Activity Coordinator (<mailto:wanderersbushwalking+reports@gmail.com> or hand them in at the next monthly meeting).
3. Present your report at the next monthly meeting.

Appendix 1 – Activity Policies

Minimum number of participants

Pre-walks, Urban Walks, Bushwalks, Remote Area Activities

Other Aspects	Mobile Phone Coverage for whole walk*	PLB carried or device with Satellite messaging capability	Other
Urban Walks (Grade 1 & 2) - <500m from street access	3	3	4
Pre-walk (unless off-track or in very remote areas)	2	3	4
On Bush tracks up to Grade 3	3	3	4
Grade 4 or above or in very remote areas	4	3	4

* Mobile Coverage for the whole walk means that at any point on the walk a participant would be able to make an emergency call (000) within a five minute walk from their current position (nominally <300m).

Other Activities

Cycles on man-made surfaces with mobile phone coverage – 2 participants

Social activities – 2 participants

Multi-day activities (camps, accommodated trips) - 4 participants

Events and Tours – by definition, these activities are run by external organisations who will have their own participation policies and insurance arrangements.

Other activities – 4 participants.

Temporary Member Restrictions

Under 18 year olds are not permitted to participate in any club activity.

Appendix 2 - Activity resources

Resources for walks

[The Bushwalking Manual published by Bushwalking Victoria.](#)

Consult walking books and leaflets.

Wanderers Library – A spreadsheet that lists the books, pamphlets and maps in the library is available to new and existing leaders. You can borrow items from the library by contacting the activity coordinator (refer to the front page of the Wanderers Activity Program)

The website www.wildwalks.com is a good source of detailed information on hundreds of walks throughout the Sydney area.

Resources for cycles

To be completed

Resources for other activities

To be completed

Appendix 3 - Grading Guide

AN EXPLANATION OF WALK GRADINGS
<p>Grade 1. Opportunity for large number of walkers, including those with reduced walking ability to walk on well marked and even tracks. Tracks are man made and may have a few steps. Should not be steep. Suitable for beginners. Distance should not exceed about 10km.</p>
<p>Grade 2. Mostly on tracks of low gradient. Opportunity to walk easily in natural environments on well marked tracks. Tracks should not be steep. Distance should not exceed about 15km.</p>
<p>Grade 3. Walk with some hilly sections &/or rougher terrain. Opportunity to walk on defined and distinct tracks with some steep sections requiring a moderate level of fitness. Suitable for fit beginners. Distance should not exceed about 20 km.</p>
<p>Grade 4. Steeper, rougher terrain & may have off-track sections (no more than one quarter of the walk) or a longer distance track walk. Opportunity to explore and discover relatively undisturbed natural environments mostly along defined and distinct tracks. Tracks can be steep. There may be short sections of rock scrambling involved. Leaders should have map reading abilities and/or ability to use a compass. Distance depending on circumstances. Not suitable for most beginners.</p>
<p>Grade 5. Off-track or difficult terrain. Opportunity for walkers with advanced outdoor knowledge and skills to find their own way along often indistinct tracks or off track in remote locations. May include steep sections of unmodified surfaces. There may be rock scrambling, creek walking & crossing involved. Distance should not exceed 30 km, but may be short & difficult. Not suitable for beginners.</p>
<p>Grade 6. Strenuous off-track walk or very long distance. Opportunity for highly experienced walkers to explore remote and challenging natural areas without reliance on managed tracks. Terrain may be steep, uneven and no track. There may be rock scrambling, creek walking & crossing involved. Distance covered is unlimited, but may be short & difficult. Only for experienced walkers and not suitable for beginners.</p>

Use the highest grade applicable to your walk using the grades for the following aspects:

Track or Path	Distance, km				
	<10	10-15	15-20	20-30	>30
Man made surfaces (road, footpath, compacted gravel)	G1	G2	G3	G4	G4
Firetrails, or equivalent bush tracks, beaches	G2	G2	G3	G4	G4
Distinct Bush tracks	G3	G3	G3	G4	G6
Off-track <25% of distance / Footpads	G4	G4	G4	G4	G6
More than 25% off-track	G5	G5	G5	G5	G6
Terrain	Gradient				
	Even / Flat / very low (some steps)	Undulating but not steep gradients / many steps	Steep	Scrambling / over 1000m steep ascent	
Even	G1	G2	G3	G4	
Uneven surfaces	G2	G2	G3	G4	
Rough Terrain / many trip or slip hazards (rock hopping, informal creek crossings)	G3	G3	G3	G4	