

Walking Safely

Tasmania the walkers paradise



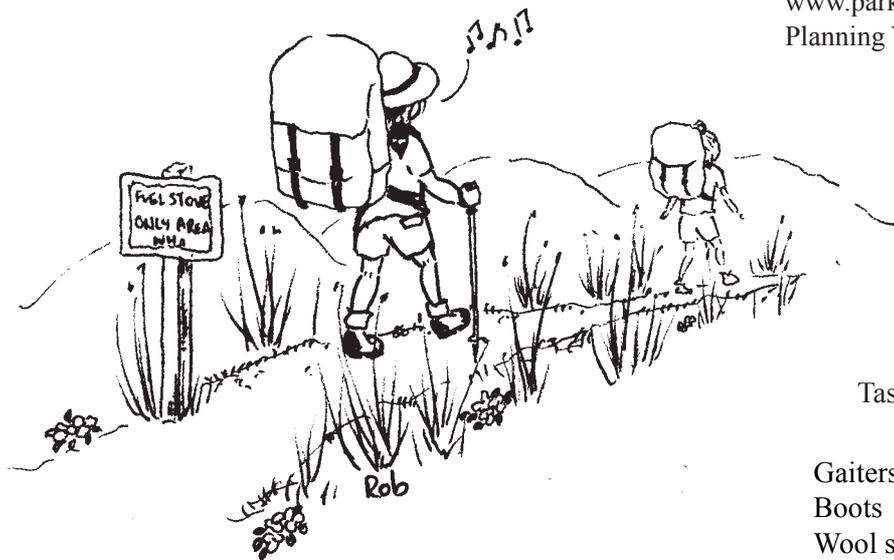
Parks and Wildlife Service Tasmania

DEPARTMENT of TOURISM, PARKS
HERITAGE and the ARTS

To enjoy your Tasmanian bushwalking experience be prepared for the track ahead, the weather and know your capabilities. When planning your trip follow our advice on equipment, track choices and first aid.

EPIRBs

A limited number of EPIRBs are available for hire. These Electronic Position Indicating Radio Beacons should only be used in life threatening situations. More information can be found on the website www.parks.tas.gov.au, go to Outdoor Recreation/ Planning Your Walk.



On the Right Track?

Tasmania caters for a wide range of bushwalking experiences. These range from short walks on formed tracks which last a few hours, to challenging walking experiences in remote wilderness, and everything in between. To enjoy your bushwalking experience, make sure you are on the right track, choose a walk that suits your level of experience and do not over-extend yourself. Get the Parks and Wildlife Service's *On the Right Track* brochure to help you decide which track to visit.

Compass and Map

Ensure that everyone in your group has researched the walk and plan the day ahead. Have a compass and map and know how to use them. If you think you are lost, stop. Think calmly. Go to a high spot or climb a tree to look for landmarks. Do not continue to travel until you know where you are. If you are lost then signal three times with a whistle, yelling or three lines in the snow. Any pattern of three is a distress signal.

What do you need to take walking?

The following is a list of equipment needed for bushwalking safely in Tasmania.

Gaiters	Clothes for walking in (thermal layers too)
Boots	Spare set of clothes (kept dry)
Wool socks	Sun hat
Wool beanie	Sunscreen
Gloves	Sunglasses
Overtrousers	Hand trowel
Rainjacket	Torch and batteries
Main meals and snacks	First Aid Kit
Waterproof matches	Whistle
Fuel stove and fuel	Gloves
Sleeping mat	Gaiters
Tent with in-built floor and poles	Boots
Sleeping bag	Wool socks
Pack liner	Wool beanie
Backpack	Gloves
Map	Drinking water
Compass	

First Aid Kit

Everyone should carry a first aid kit. First aid kits should have at least the following items:

Pressure Bandage	Broad Bandage
Survival Blanket	Absorbent Bandages
Tape for Blisters	Antiseptic
	Tweezers

Hypothermia

What is it?

Hypothermia is a lowering of the body's temperature to abnormally low temperatures (less than about 35° Celsius). **Death may result.**

How is it caused?

Hypothermia is caused by exposure to cold and is intensified by wetness, wind and exhaustion. Alcohol and drugs can be contributing factors as they reduce the body's ability to regulate temperature.

How can you tell if someone is suffering from it?

Hypothermia is a progressive condition, however death from exposure can be very rapid. Every member of the party should be alert for the signs. Some or all of these symptoms may be present:

fatigue, pale, cold skin, uncontrollable shivering, poor co-ordination.

These symptoms, if not treated will lead to:

decrease in shivering, slurred speech, irrational behaviour, hallucinations, collapse and coma or even death.

How can it be avoided?

The best defence against hypothermia is to avoid exposure.

Stay dry — when clothing is wet, it loses approximately 90% of its insulating value and drains heat from the body. Unlike cotton, down and most synthetics, wool will retain most of its insulating value when wet. Modern 'fibrepile' fabrics also retain heat very well when wet.

How can it be treated?

If the initial symptoms of hypothermia (shivering, poor coordination and fatigue) are detected, action must be taken immediately. **Stop exposure.** Do not keep walking — **immediate** treatment is required. Get out of the wind and rain. If possible, remove wet clothing and put on dry clothing. Get the victim into a sleeping bag. Another person in the bag will help increase the warmth more rapidly. Warm sweet drinks such as milo will help restore body heat. Only build a fire or start a fuel stove after heat loss at the skin surface has been stopped.

Gastro

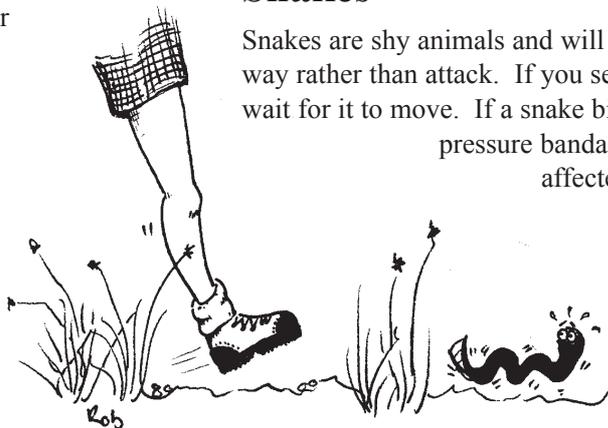
Giardia, Gastro and Crypto all cause nausea and diarrhoea. To help control these infections please:

- * boil all drinking water for 3 minutes,
- * wash your hands after going to the toilet and before eating,
- * prepare food on clean surfaces, and
- * use toilets if they are provided - if there is no toilet then walk 100 m away from water and the track, dig a 15 cm hole and bury your waste and toilet paper in it.

Snakes

Snakes are shy animals and will usually get out of the way rather than attack. If you see a snake stop and wait for it to move. If a snake bites, apply a firm pressure bandage to the entire limb affected. Send the most

experienced two people out to get help and have one person stay behind with the injured.



Blisters

Blisters are the most common first aid problem for bushwalkers. Wear two pairs of socks and make sure your boots fit properly. If you have a sore spot protect the area with adhesive tape.

Twisted ankles

A twisted ankle may recover after a day of rest and keeping it elevated and cold. If the ankle hurts to walk do not carry on. Your group must decide to wait before continuing or to send the most experienced two people out to get help and have one person stay behind with the injured.

Further information

Contact the Parks and Wildlife Service
Walker Education Officer
Ph: (03) 6233 2669

Images thanks to Robyn Holmes

FURTHER INFORMATION

Head Office: 134 Macquarie Street Hobart TAS 7000
Phone: 1300 135 513

Internet: www.parks.tas.gov.au
December 2003 © State of Tasmania