



*ACT Walking for Pleasure Inc.*

## **GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING WALKS IN EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS**

ACT Walking for Pleasure Objectives include promotion of walking as an activity for health, fitness, and positive attitudes to exercise and social interaction, implicitly for the enjoyment of participants. It is incumbent on the group to consider safety of participants as a priority.

To that end, the following are guidelines to be considered in the event of extreme conditions, such as hot, cold or stormy weather.

All participants and leaders need to take reasonable care to avoid exposing any person, including other participants, to unreasonable risk of injury. It should be noted that people have unique reactions to extreme conditions, depending on fitness, past history, medical conditions etc. The key is to look out for each other.

**However, it is also the participant's responsibility to consider the difficulty of the walk and the weather conditions on the day before proceeding. Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Longer walks require a reasonable level of fitness.**

### **Responsibilities of Participants**

Participants should

- Make a well-thought-out decision whether they should participate on a walk or not
- Take responsibility for their own welfare and safety in a manner consistent with their knowledge, age, experience and skill, weather conditions and degree of difficulty of the walk
- Ensure they carry enough water and electrolytes, sunscreen, hat, relevant medication (e.g. asthma puffer) and wear appropriate clothing for the weather
- Ensure they have eaten and hydrated properly beforehand
- Stay in visual contact with the people immediately in front of them. If they lose contact, they must call out to those in front to stop and wait for those behind to catch up
- Not walk ahead of the group without the consent of the leader
- Tell the leader if they are not comfortable with the pace of the walk, if they become affected by heat, cold, illness or an injury, or if they have any other concerns e.g. about another walker
- Write the name and phone number for an Emergency Contact on the back of their name badge, and wear the badge on every walk
- If unable to keep up a reasonable pace and stay together with the group, they may need to turn back or wait to be evacuated

## Responsibilities of Walk Coordinators and Walk Leaders

### Walk Coordinators should

- Ensure that Walk Leaders give route descriptions which encompass a degree of difficulty (e.g. steepness) and any potential hazards (e.g. loose gravel, creek crossings)
- Shorten or cancel a walk if extreme conditions are anticipated during the walk (eg temperatures in the 30s or higher, driving rain, extreme cold, Total Fire Ban in the area) in consultation with the Walk Leader
- For longer walks in remote areas, a Personal Locator Beacon should be carried in the group
- Carry the phone number for ACCESS CANBERRA 13 22 81, for walks in Namadgi National Park, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, Murrumbidgee River Corridor, Mulligan's Flat Nature Reserve and other areas with locked gates, if there is an urgent safety issue. If an ambulance needs to be called, they will have access to most gates
- Consider installing the Emergency+ app on their phones
- Ensure there is an appropriate First Aid Kit available
- Appoint a "tail-ender" with a whistle to monitor the pace of the group
- Communicate with the Walk Leader if there are any concerns
- Complete an Incident Report Form if the First Aid Kit is used or medical attention is called

### Walk Leaders should

- Explore the route beforehand and be aware of shelter, potential access spots and potential hazards
- Ensure that the published walk description will have enough detail in it for participants to judge whether they should undertake this walk. Detail should include a degree of difficulty (e.g. steepness) and any potential hazards (e.g. loose gravel, creek crossings)
- Be aware of possible short cuts or reasonable turn-around spots
- Walk at a pace that keeps the group together, bearing in mind the planned time frame and other provisions of these guidelines
- Have appropriate breaks during the walk
- Adjust the walk, in consultation with the Walk Coordinator, if conditions change dramatically (e.g. sudden thunderstorm, snow etc)
- Communicate with the Walk Coordinator if there are any concerns

### When a walker is struggling

- If someone is struggling the Walk Leader and Walk Coordinator should be informed. At least two able walkers should remain with that person for support and monitoring
- First Aid should be applied in the case of hyperthermia or hypothermia
- In consultation with the Walk Leader and Walk Coordinator, a decision should be made about whether the walker should turn back, accompanied by two able walkers or be evacuated