

Scouts NSW Adventurous Activities

Bushwalking Activities Standard Operating Procedures



These Standard Operating Procedures are issued and updated by the State Activities Council and distributed by the State Commissioner Adventurous Activities on behalf of the Chief Commissioner of NSW. They outline the requirements for the conduct of Adventurous Activities within Scouts NSW.

Version 4.0

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1 Conduct of Activities

- 1.1 These Standard Operating Procedures should be read in conjunction with the Scouts NSW Adventurous Activity Policy. The term 'bushwalking activities' includes all walking activities conducted in the natural environment. This includes alpine, forested, desert, coastal or wilderness locations. Walks may be from a few hours (day walks), weekend (3---day) or expeditions (4---days or more).
- 1.2 Scout bushwalking activities should be conducted with due regard to all relevant land management, minimal impact and environmental requirements.
- 1.3 Walks conducted in suburban reserves, specified walking trails through urban areas or national parks that interface with residential areas are classified as urban walks and are exempt from these Standard Operating Procedures. Reasonable examples of this would be Mt Annan Reserve, Lane Cove National Park and most community based parks. The RC Activities is responsible for identifying such areas. (These walks are suitable for Cub Scout Award requirements.)
- 1.4 For the purposes of the Scout and Venturer section award schemes the Section Leader is responsible for ensuring that youth members are suitably trained prior to participating in a bushwalking activity.
- 1.5 The Scout/Venturer Section Leader is identified as the bushwalking trip Leader, albeit by remote, for award requirements, the leader signing off adventurous activities must hold the relevant qualification and have them recorded on their NSW member record. While Basic Section Leader training provides Section Leaders with these skills, they must seek additional support and advice from the RC Activities or Bushwalking SME where necessary, in line with their personal experience and currency in bushwalking skills.

2 Equipment

- 2.1 It is recognised that participants may have considerable personal equipment, usually obtained over many years of experience. While it remains the personal responsibility for participants to ensure that their equipment is in good order, the Adventurous Activity Coordinator should ensure that the equipment is suitable for the particular activity.
- 2.2 All equipment is to be used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and must meet recognised standards where such standards exist.
- 2.3 Navigation equipment appropriate to the situation must be carried. The Adventurous Activity Coordinator must be competent in the use of topographical maps and compasses. Relying solely on electronic navigation devices is not appropriate.

- 2.4 Participants are to be informed of the type and quality of equipment they are expected to bring. Specific mention should be made of anticipated weather conditions and seasonal factors.
- 2.5 Sufficient food and refreshments suitable for the activity should be carried. Overnight activities should include at least one day's emergency rations.
- 2.6 Individual equipment (including personal protective equipment) is appropriate for the anticipated conditions.
- 2.7 A suitable first aid kit must be available on every activity. Individual participants are also encouraged to carry a first aid kit that should include personal medications.
- 2.8 An electronic emergency locating device must be available on all activities more than one hour from an emergency response.

3 Leader to Participant Ratios and Party Sizes

- 3.1 Leader to participant ratios and minimum party size are to be determined by a risk assessment process based on the following considerations:
 - Level of difficulty and the skills required
 - Anticipated environmental conditions, remoteness and duration of the activity
 - Weather conditions and future forecasts
 - Prior experience of leaders and participants
 - Requirements of land owners or managers
 - Availability of communications and access
 - Environmental sustainability
- 3.2 For youth sections the minimum party sizes must be in accordance with sectional award scheme requirements.
- 3.3 The Adventurous Activity Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that maximum numbers do not exceed locality specific requirements.

4 Qualifications

- 4.1 The gaining of bushwalking qualifications is via the Scouts Australia Institute of Training.
- 4.2 All required qualifications must be recognized by Scouts NSW and be recorded on the individual's member record.

5 Track Ratings

5.1 The Fieldbook for Australian Scouting provides a detailed explanation of the Australian Track Ratings, and should be used to assist in the planning of bushwalking activities. The 'environment' ratings are consistent with SIS0 training definitions and the Australian Standards for Walking Tracks. Areas that do not fall under these definitions should be referred to the State Commissioner Adventurous Activities and Training or their delegate.

Class	Description	Environment Rating
1	Paths in local parkland – suitable for all ages	Controlled
2	Nature circuits in parkland – suitable for all ages	Controlled
3	Well used tracks in major national parks and state forests – may be suitable for older children with adult supervision, teenagers and adults with appropriate training	Controlled
4	Less used tracks in national parks and forests – suitable for experienced walkers	Controlled
5	Minor trails in remote or distant national parks and forests – suitable for very experienced walkers	Intermediate
6	Little used trails (that may or may not be obvious) in remote areas in national parks, forests or wilderness – suitable for highly experienced walkers	Uncontrolled
References: <p style="text-align: right;">SISOBWG Range Statements AS 2156.1---2001 Walking tracks --- Classification and signage</p>		