



Darwin Bushwalking Club: WalkSafe Policy

Introduction

The Darwin Bushwalking Club promotes safe walking to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all members. DBC organises many multi-day walks in remote areas, often where there is no access to phones or assistance. Walkers need to be well prepared before starting a walk (right level of fitness, appropriate equipment, etc) so that problems can be avoided. In the event of an incident, they must be prepared to effectively support the leader or group in dealing with a situation.

The type of emergency and how it is managed is dependent on -

- skills, resources and equipment in the group;
- distance away from support;
- fitness, age and health of the injured person; and
- the type of injury.

Equipment

DBC Policy: All walkers should ensure that they have the appropriate equipment for the walk.

Common problems such as sunstroke, twisted ankles, fatigue, shoe blow-out, etc can be avoided by having the right gear for the walk and avoiding carrying excessive weight. This includes reliable walking shoes, hat, lightweight clothing, sun screen, water, food and shelter. Information on appropriate gear for Top End walks can be obtained from your leader, the DBC Handbooks (see below) and from more experienced club members.

Fitness

DBC Policy: All walkers should ensure that their fitness level matches the walk AND advise the leader of any medical condition that could impact on their ability to walk.

Walkers should not automatically assume that they can join a walk. Leaders can provide information about terrain and expected conditions, and request information about a person's level of experience. They have the right to refuse people with insufficient fitness or experience. Walkers should be honest and forthcoming in providing information about their current fitness or injury situation.

First Aid

DBC Policy: All walkers and leaders should carry their own first aid equipment.

DBC encourages all members to undertake training in first aid, and contributes to the cost of relevant courses for walk leaders. Most non-emergency events should be managed on the walk without external assistance. Emergency devices are to be used in emergencies only.

Insurance

DBC Policy: All walkers must be members or registered visitors

The DBC's insurance covers members for some costs associated with genuine, reported accidents. This includes out of pocket medical expenses or loss of income. To get maximum benefit and avoid the insurer's cut-off, members should renew early when annual fees are due and report any accidents promptly.

DBC Policy: All walkers are recommended to have ambulance cover.

Emergency evacuations to the nearest point of assistance generally do not incur a cost. However relocation from that point to Darwin may require an ambulance which can be costly. You will need to meet the cost of the ambulance and ambulance cover is therefore strongly recommended.

Emergency Contact Devices: EPIRB

DBC Policy: DBC encourages walkers to carry an emergency contact device.

DBC has an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Device (EPIRB) available for loan by any club member. The EPIRB is to be activated only in the event of **grave and immediate danger to life**. On activation, the EPIRB automatically alerts emergency rescue services with details of your location. It is not a two-way contact device and you cannot stop the rescue, or provide information on the nature of your emergency, prior to arrival of rescuers.

Further information is available at:

www.darwinbushwalkingclub.org.au/documents/GuidelinesForEPIRBs.pdf

Club members are required to record and report all use of emergency devices to the DBC committee.

Accident and Incident Reporting

DBC Policy: All walkers must sign an Acknowledgment of Risk form before walking.

Forms are normally provided by the leader and can be downloaded from the DBC website. Completed forms are to be sent to the DBC PO Box or emailed to president@darwinbushwalkingclub.org.au.

DBC Policy: Any accident occurring on a walk should be reported as soon as possible to a committee member.

This includes name of person, details of accident and any treatment provided. This will assist the committee to assess the situation and develop any procedures to avoid similar accidents. If there is any likelihood of an insurance claim, the insurer will also need to be promptly notified.

Drive Safe

DBC Policy: Drivers should take care when driving and passengers to assist if required.

Long drives are common to access walks in the Top End, often at night and after a tiring weekend of walking. DBC encourages drivers to take breaks and share driving with passengers. All drivers must take due care and ensure that their vehicle is roadworthy and registered.

DBC Handbooks for Walkers and Leaders

DBC Policy: All walkers are expected to be familiar with the DBC Handbook for Walkers.

The DBC has developed two handbooks which are useful guides with detailed practical advice on safety issues, suitable for all walkers. They are available from the DBC website.

www.darwinbushwalkingclub.org.au/documents/HandbookForWalkers.pdf

www.darwinbushwalkingclub.org.au/documents/HandbookForLeaders.pdf

A Final Note....

The DBC committee has endorsed these policies and will review periodically. It is requested that all members apply them to their walks. If you would like further information or to provide feedback, please contact a committee member or email: president@darwinbushwalkingclub.org.au .

In the meantime, WalkSafe and Enjoy!