

Guidelines for a Bushwalking Club Emergency Contact System

In the interests of safety, it is well recognised best bushwalking practice to leave detailed trip intention information with a responsible person, ie information that would enable suitable action to be taken in the event of a serious accident or unexpected delay in a party's return from a walk. Bushwalking Victoria recommends that all clubs have in place an efficient emergency contact system for all official club trips.

A suitable system would ensure that:

- The club creates a roster of volunteers to act as club emergency contacts, each of whom is advised of procedures for alerting police when a search or assistance is judged to be needed by a club walking group.

Before a trip:

- Walkers on a club trip are made aware of the name and phone number of the rostered emergency contact and the expected time of return by the leader.
- Each walker may then forward this information to a personal contact with the advice to ring the club contact for information if concerned about an unexpected delay in return.
- The leader provides the rostered club contact with a trip itinerary and expected time of a phone call notification of safe return.*

On return:

- Leader advises the club contact as soon as possible of a safe return.
- Walkers advise their personal contact person of safe return.
- If no contact is made within a reasonable time of the arranged return call by the leader, the club contact establishes where possible that the call has not simply been forgotten, and begins the established procedure which will usually include alerting police of a possible need for assistance.

* This is the minimum of information required with respect to safety of the walking group as a whole.

Additional information that involves further documentation, but could in certain circumstances be useful are:

- Names and personal contact details for all group members.
- Vehicle registration numbers.
- Special conditions with respect to weather, terrain or equipment expected.
- Confidential details of medical conditions or special requirements of members.