27 November 2025

CLUB PROTOCOLS AND GUIDELINES

Essendon Bushwalking Club Inc

Table of Contents

Preamble 1

1. Membership 1
2. Life membership 1
3. Temporary and non-financial Members 1
4. Non qualifying event (NQE) 2
5. Travelling and travel costs 2
6. Booking on a walk 2
7. Health condition or disability 3
8. Departure points 3
9. Children 3
10. Pets 3
11. Leaders 4
12. Grade definitions 4
13. Minimum number on a walk 5
14. Keeping the group together 5
15. Separated 5
16. Lost 5
17. Suggested day walk gear/clothing 6
18. Overnight gear/clothing 7
19 Natural disasters 7
19.1 Storm/Bushfire 7
19.2 Flooded Rivers, Seas, Tides 8
20. Snake bite 8
21. Trip intentions (for Leaders) 9
22. Emergency contact/personal details 9
23. Rescue co-ordination centre (for an overdue party) 9
24. Fire season, extreme heat and total fire ban policies 10
24.1 Fire Season Policy 10
24.2 High temperature Days 11
24.3 Total Fire Ban Days 11
25. Use of personal locator beacon 11
26. References 11

Preamble

This document constitutes the By-Laws for the Essendon Bushwalking Club Incorporated as provided for by *Part 7 of the Rules of Association*.

1. Membership

Membership is conditional upon:

(a) Completion of the required number of qualifying walks within a twelve month period, being either two Club program day walks or one Club program multi-day event.

(b) Approval by the Committee.

(c) Payment of the prescribed membership fee within twenty-eight days. Only one reminder will be sent if payment is not received within the twenty-eight day \\\\request for payment. If payment is not received after the second request the application is rejected. *(*See *Rules of Association, Part 3).*

Membership fees for new Members are as follows:

- From June 1 to December 31: full membership fee as determined annually by the committee.
- From January 1 to April 30: half membership fee as determined annually by the committee.
- From May 1 to May 31: flat rate of $10.

2. Life membership

See *Rules of Association, Part 3 – Members, Disciplinary Procedures and Grievances, Rule 1. Full Member, Paragraph I*.

3. Temporary and non-financial Members

All adult visitors will be charged a visitor administration fee of $5 for each Club activity they attend, (excepting those that are already a member of a Bushwalking Victoria affiliated club) and are required to complete the “Acknowledgement of Risk and Obligations by Temporary Members” form (excludes social activities) to cover the visitor for insurance purposes.

Visitors are expected to join the Club after the completion the required number of qualifying walks within a twelve month period. *(*See *Rules of Association, Part 7 – General Matter, Rule 3. Visitors.)*

Upon completion of the qualifying walks and submission of the three page “Application for Membership” form and the membership fee to the Membership Secretary, whilst the Committee is processing their application a pending Member may participate in Club activities without having to pay the visitor administration fee.

4. Non qualifying event (NQE)

Participating in an NQE is not part of the qualifying walks entry for membership into the Club.

Visitors may attend one activity NQE and attend one social NQE event during the qualifying period for membership.

All walks of less than ten kilometres (excepting those graded Medium or Hard see **12. Grade definitions**) are defined as NQE for the purpose of entry to membership.

Social NQE – e.g. restaurant nights/ movie nights/ theatre

A financial Member can bring a spouse, partner or friend along to a social NQE. However, a visitor to the Club may attend a social NQE only once prior to joining the Club.

Activity NQE – e.g. bike ride, canoeing, skiing

A visitor to the Club may attend an activity NQE only once during the qualifying period for membership. They must pay the visitor administration fee and complete the "Acknowledgement of Risk and Obligations by Temporary Members" form prior to the event.

5. Travelling and travel costs

A car-pooling fee is charged to passengers attending walks in vehicles used on Club activities. The Leader of the designated walk determines the cost to passengers as per current car-pooling fee. The current car-pooling fee applies, however an individual driver may lower the fee if they wish. The fee may not be raised above designated fee of 10 cents per kilometre per passenger.

Extra fees may be included if applicable for entry fees, parking or e-tag costs, where applicable.

It is prudent to organise efficient sharing of vehicles and, for safety considerations, to remember to break a long journey, particularly on the way home after a strenuous walk. When parking in a bush area for the start /finish of a walk, or when carrying out a car shuffle for non-circuit walks, no car driver or car should be left on their own at the finish. At least the two last cars/drivers must leave together in case of failure to start a car, or similar problem.

6. Booking on a walk

The Leader is required to book their intention to Lead the walk by logging into the Club's website and register their own name and mandatory details online.

Participants are required to book their intention to join a walk by logging into the Club's website and register their own name and mandatory details online prior to the walk cut off date and time. Should the participant not have access to the internet, bookings may be made by phoning the Leader. The Leader will then enter the participant's name and emergency contact details to the online booking system.

Note: All Leaders have a duty of care to ensure the safety of all participants and may refuse to take any person on any activity if a Leader considers that the person or the person's equipment is not fit or not suitable for the activity, or when their emergency contact details have not been provided.

7. Health condition or disability

Participants have a duty of care to inform the Leader in advance of any condition or disability that may affect their ability to participate safely in the activity. This discussion is confidential.

The Club strongly recommends Ambulance Membership to all walkers.

In the interest of the health and safety of all Members, we encourage all Members and visitors to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Members and visitors must not participate in Club events if they develop any symptoms or knowingly come in contact with COVID-19 in the week before Club event. A Member or visitor must notify the Leader if the Member tests positive for COVID-19 in the week following participation in a Club event. The Leader will then notify participants, promptly by telephone/mobile phone, of the occurrence of a positive test for COVID-19 while maintaining privacy. The Leader can call for assistance/support from the Committee, so that the phone notification to participants occurs promptly.

8. Departure points

Unless otherwise advised, all Saturday and Sunday activities leave at 8.00 am from the car park opposite the Moonee Ponds Bowling Club in Mt Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds (Melways Map 28 H6). For all other activities the Leader will advise departure points or meeting points.

9. Children

Children below the age of 18 must be accompanied by a responsible adult on a walk who is a Member of the Club.

Responsible adults are responsible for children's behaviour and safety and they must inform the Leader in advance if they wish to bring children on certain activities. It is at the Leader's discretion whether to accept children on their walk. For children who are not Junior Members of the Club, no visitor administration fee applies.

Visitors may not bring children on any Club Program events.

Leaders who promote activities on the Club Program that are targeted at children, must have a current Working With Children Check (WWCC). Leaders are otherwise encouraged to have a current WWCC. The Club Committee will monitor Victorian Government requirements for WWCC.

10. Pets

For any Club events outside of the Melbourne metropolitan area, Members or visitors are not permitted to bring pets. Exceptions apply to assistance animals.

11. Leaders

Only Members with training and experience, that is acceptable to the Committee, can lead walks and submit walks to the online Club Program.

Club Members who are not Leaders may organise and run social events such as dinners and, with the support of a Committee Member or a Leader, arrange for notice of the event via the online Club Program.

12. Grade definitions

All walks of less than 10 kilometres (excepting those graded Medium or Hard) are defined as
Non Qualifying Events (NQEs) for the purpose of entry to membership.

The following definitions are a guide only and are referenced against the abilities of fit experienced walkers.

Easy (E)

Suitable for beginners:

- Mostly on formed tracks with the possibility of very short sections of light off-track walking.
- Gently undulating terrain.

Medium (M)

Suitable for fit and more experienced walkers:

- Some sustained climbs or descents.
- Some scrub bashing.
- Some rock scrambling.

Hard (H)

For fit, experienced walkers:

- Long steep climbs or descents.
- Heavy scrub bashing.
- Hard rock scrambling.

The walk grade is a combination of overall walk length and the walk distance on track compared to off-track and over specific terrain, and the degree of scrub bashing or rock scrambling, and overall ascent or descent. Weather conditions in the lead up to and on the day can also affect the grade of the walk e.g. after prolonged periods of rain – increase in slippery walk surfaces and the number and height of creek crossings.

For some walks, a hybrid walk grade can more effectively describe overall and changeable experiences during the walk e.g. Easy-Medium (E-M); Medium-Hard (M-H).

13. Minimum number on a walk

Whilst small numbers are easier to manage, a minimum of four is required for safety, particularly where walks are conducted in non-urban areas. In an emergency requiring external assistance, one Member can care for the injured person whilst two Members walk out to raise the alarm.

14. Keeping the group together

With larger groups it is advisable that the responsibility for keeping the group together is taken by both a Leader and an appointed whip. The latter is a person who brings up the rear and keeps track of the entire group to ensure that no one is left behind. This is a particularly important role when the Leader is occupied with navigation or the group has mixed physical abilities.

It is important to regroup at track junctions and maintain sight contact on untracked or poorly marked routes.

15. Separated

If your party becomes separated, a search should be undertaken in the immediate area in the location where the missing persons were last seen, or likely to have made a wrong decision. However, if they are not found within three to four hours it is unlikely that your party will have the resources to undertake a full-scale search and you will need to seek external assistance. If communication by phone is not possible a competent sub-group should be sent for the nearest help, with others remaining as visible as possible near the last point of contact.

The Police are responsible for all search and rescue operations in Victoria and should be the first source of contact for assistance in an emergency.

To notify Police of an overdue party, call Emergency on 000.

16. Lost

Leaders should have navigation competency in the activity they are leading.

Have an experienced navigator in your party and take every opportunity to improve your own navigational skills. It is always handy to carry a map and compass and know how to use them. Pay attention to geographical features and general terrain and regularly identify your position on your map. When features on the ground do not agree with those on the map, STOP and access the situation before a temporary disorientation becomes a major loss of position. Although a mobile phone is potentially useful to a lost party, it should not be regarded as security against becoming lost. Most mobile phones will not operate in many of the locations in Victoria popular with bushwalkers.

A GPS is a valuable back-up navigational tool but cannot replace proper navigational skills.

Action

Stop. Do not panic. Stay together and pool your knowledge and expertise. Identify your last confirmed position and estimate your present location. If possible, retrace your steps to where you were comfortable that you knew your position. Alternatively, if possible, proceed on a course which must bring you to a known feature in a reasonable time, such as a road, or stream. Otherwise remain where you are and make phone contact with Police, if possible. Keep calm, warm and seek shelter whilst waiting for assistance. Be prepared to devise ways to attract the attention of searchers in the air or on the ground e.g. blasts on your whistle.

Listen for calls or whistles from ground search parties. Remember that ground searchers are listening as well as looking, so attract attention to your location using the recognised distress signal of three regularly spaced calls. The “three calls” can be made by whatever means possible such as shouts, whistle blasts or even banging a spoon on a billy. At night use three torch flashes.

17. Suggested day walk gear/clothing

Terrain

Always wear comfortable, well-treaded footwear. Preferably boots with ankle support when pack carrying or walking on rough ground. Gaiters give protection from grass seeds, stones, scrub, snow, snakes and leeches. Jeans must not be worn.

Sun

Hat, light weight long-sleeved shirt, insect repellent, sunscreen, sunglasses. Extra water will need to be carried on hot days.

Rain

Always carry a good water-resistant and windproof jacket, preferably thigh length, with integral hood, not padded, and not a light nylon “spray jacket”. No jeans.

Cold

Beanie gloves; thermal underwear; woollen socks; woollen jumper or polar fleece.

Back Pack

Comfortable, of adequate size, and lined with a strong plastic bag to keep contents dry. Recommended contents include:

- Hat/sunglasses
- Insect repellent/sun screen
- Water bottles (durable) filled with drinking water
- Compass/map (optional for non-Leader)
- Watch and mobile phone if available
- Whistle
- Pencil and paper
- Toilet paper

- Torch
- Food/energy snacks (suitable for the walk). It is preferable to keep food in a plastic container or zip-lock bags – avoid cling wrap or aluminium foil
- First aid kit – which should include items such as: triangular bandage, tweezers, pain relievers, blister kit, antiseptic, assorted band-aids, wound dressings, elastic/compression bandage etc., personal medication
- Emergency contact/personal details, is to be clearly written and held in a film canister which is to be stored in an external back pack pocket
  (see **Section 22, page 9**)

18. Overnight gear/clothing

Ideally your back pack should weigh no more than one fifth to one quarter of your body weight. In addition to what you would bring on a day walk, the following items are required on an overnight walk.

- Tent preferably with fly, integral floor, insect proof
- Sleeping bag – Seal in plastic bag to ensure that it stays dry. Liner sheet is recommended
- Sleeping mat – Closed cell foam or self-inflating mat
- Stove – Compact, and a sufficiently full fuel container (leak-proof and clearly labelled)
- Matches – Sealed in waterproof container, or lighter
- Water/extra water containers, water treatment tablets or device e.g. filter
- Mug, bowl/plate, utensils
- Pocket knife
- Trowel
- Mobile phone/portable charger
- Energy food
- Change of clothes
- Map and compass
- Personal locator beacon (PLB) for walks in remote areas
  (see **Section 25, page 10**)
- Other personal items as necessary, etc.

Note: Always carry a little extra food for an emergency.

19 Natural disasters

19.1 Storm/Bushfire

Electrical Storm

Avoid high ground and isolated objects such as a tree in a clearing, overhanging cliffs or caves. If possible, insulate yourself from the ground by sitting on your pack. Members of a party may sit together but should not be in contact.

Bushfire

If caught walking in the path of a bushfire:

- Walk quickly, preferably downhill, look for possible shelter.
- Seek shelter from radiant heat which is the killer in a bushfire. Look for a stream or pool, a hollow in the ground such as an eroded gully or roadside drain, rocky outcrops or large log, a hut or building, or a large cleared or recently burnt area.
- Cover any exposed skin with clothing, (preferably cotton or wool) earth or thick bark.
- Lie face down and breathe the cooler, less smoke-filled air close to the ground. Drink water regularly to avoid dehydration.
- Stay in your chosen shelter until the fire front has passed.
- As a last resort, you may be able to run through low flames onto burnt ground.

19.2 Flooded Rivers, Seas, Tides

If a walk involves river crossings, after heavy rain in catchment areas the Leader must make every attempt to check status of rivers and bridges and plan an alternative route.

The Leader must check if the safety of a coastal walk is affected by tide or local weather conditions.

20. Snake bite

Unprovoked, snakes rarely attack humans, therefore, do not disturb a snake in your pathway, simply alert the other Members of your party to give it a wide berth. Take particular care in warm weather, long grass, hollow logs, near water or rocks in sunny positions. In areas where snakes are prevalent it is wise to wear long trousers and/or gaiters. Although snakes cannot hear they can detect vibration in the ground, so walk heavily to encourage them to instinctively flee from your path.

Victims usually know they have been bitten. Symptoms may appear 15 minutes to 2 hours after the bite and may be mild or severe, depending on the species and the bite.

If a Member of the party is bitten:

- Immediately apply firm pressure over the bite site.
- Lay the victim down and keep them calm and at complete rest.
- Apply a broad firm bandage to the bitten area and around as much of the limb as possible, without removing clothing. Bandage as tightly as for a sprain and work up the limb to include the joint above the bite site.
- Immobilize the limb with a makeshift splint.
- Constantly observe the patient for shock and respiratory failure.
- Dispatch other Members of the party with knowledge of your location to bring outside help and transport.

DO NOT apply an arterial tourniquet.

DO NOT cut or wash a bite – venom on bandages can be used to identify the snake, which is required to ensure the correct anti-venom is used.

21. Trip intentions (for Leaders)

The purpose of the Trip Intentions Form is to provide a nominated club Emergency Contact with details of the trip, and a "safe return-time" for the trip. If the Emergency Contact has not been notified of the trip's return by the nominated time, he/she will initially attempt to contact the Trip Leader, then, if unsuccessful in this, will contact Victoria Police to report that the group is overdue, and make available the information on the Trip Intentions Form. (for the information expected, see "Trip Intentions Form" template under "Leader's Information" on the Club Website.)

Completion of a Trip Intentions Form should be considered for any club event into remote areas, where there is the possibility that the group may become lost or delayed and have no effective means of communication. The decision as to whether a Trip Intentions Form will be prepared should initially be made by the Trip Leader when registering the event as a Club Activity, and the Leader will inform the Walks Coordinator that they intend to complete a Trip Intentions Form.

The club Walks Coordinator will monitor up-coming events into remote areas and, where the Leader has NOT indicated that he/she will complete a Trip Intentions Form, may, after consultation, recommend to the Leader that one should be completed.

22. Emergency contact/personal details

All Club Members and Visitors are required to carry in their back pack a completed form with:

- their own name, address, home telephone number and mobile phone number
- the name and telephone/mobile phone number of a contact person in case of emergency
- details of any health problems
- medication currently prescribed or taking/using
- information on health insurance and ambulance cover, as relevant.

A template "Emergency Health, Medication and Contact Details Form" available via the Club website under "Documents – Other Documents". It is a requirement to store your completed form within a film canister in an external pocket of your back pack, where it is easily accessible. A canister is available from the Club's Membership Secretary for $1.

23. Rescue co-ordination centre (for an overdue party)

To notify Authorities of an overdue party, call Emergency 000.

Have details of the group and the intentions at hand before calling. This number can also be used by Leaders to initiate the rescue of an injured walker.

24. Fire season, extreme heat and total fire ban policies

24.1 Fire Season Policy

During the fire season (November - April)

- For activities in forest areas the Leader should check with the Country Fire Authority (CFA)/Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) website - authority applicable to the walk area - that the area is listed as safe to walk in before commencing the activity.
- All participants will take responsibility for their ability to walk in heat, wear appropriate clothing and carry adequate water.

For extended overnight walks during the fire season (November - April)

- Leaders should develop a contingency plan taking into account the possible impact of heat, total fire bans, fires, road and park closures and water availability.
- Leaders must obtain up to date weather and fire ban information to decide whether the contingency plan and/or an early exit should be implemented.

24.2 High temperature Days

On days where the temperature is forecast to exceed 35°C, walks will be cancelled. Cancellation of a walk at a lower forecast temperature may even be necessary. At the Leader's discretion an alternative walk can proceed. For example in a setting which is forecast as cooler (by the seaside) and the Leader should notify all walkers registered for their walk of this intention.

24.3 Total Fire Ban Days

Walks in the bush and remote areas should not proceed on days of Total Fire Ban. At the Leader's discretion, a walk in a lower risk area (e.g. an urban walk) may be substituted. The Leader should notify all walkers registered for their walk of this intention.

25. Use of personal locator beacon

The Club has a personal locator beacon (PLB) to provide an added level of safety for walks undertaken in remote areas. Its use is subject to the following conditions:

- Walk Leaders have first priority for the use of the PLB. If it is not required by a walk Leader then other Members of the Club may borrow it with the approval of the committee.
- Walks listed on the current walks program have priority; however, it may be borrowed for pre-walks by Leaders when there is no conflict of timing.
- The borrower should familiarise themselves with its use and takes full responsibility for its activation. Instructions are available on the Club website.
- The trip intentions, party details and emergency contact for each use must be updated on the "Beacons and MMSI Register" website (https://www.beacons.amsa.gov.au/) by the borrower before the walk is undertaken. At the end of each walk the details should be removed from the website.
- The PLB will be retained by the Club President.

26. References

- Vic Walk "*Walksafe*" Booklet
- Essendon Bushwalking Club Incorporated "*Rules of Association*"