



BUSHWALKERS CODE FOR MINIMAL IMPACT BUSHWALKING

Extract from the Confederation of Bushwalkers (NSW) Bushwalkers' Code for Minimal Impact Bushwalking (Revised February 2004).

Do not disturb our bushland

If you enjoy the pleasures of bushwalking and related self-reliant outdoor activities, you have a big responsibility to protect and preserve the natural landscape for the enjoyment of future generations. This guide will help you enjoy the bush without leaving your mark.

Be self reliant

- Enjoy the natural landscape as it is, on nature's terms. Carry with you the things you need for your comfort and safety.
- For shelter, carry a lightweight tent or flysheet, or use a cave or rock overhang. Avoid huts except when weather conditions are really bad, but be prepared to share the hut.
- Do not camp in an overhang with Indigenous rock art, as the art can be damaged by dust, smoke and fumes (See also 'Respect Indigenous Heritage')

Tread softly

- Keep walking parties small in number; four to six people is ideal.
- Avoid popular areas in holiday periods when campsites are crowded.
- Use existing tracks; don't create new ones. On zigzag paths, don't cut corners as this creates unsightly damage that leads to erosion.
- In trackless country, spread your party out; don't walk in one another's footsteps. Avoid easily damaged places such as peat bogs, cushion moss, swamps and fragile rock formations.
- Wade through waterlogged sections of tracks; don't create a skein of new tracks around them.
- Except in really rough terrain, wear lightweight, soft-soled walking shoes or joggers rather than heavy boots.
- Become proficient at bush navigation. If you need to build cairns, blaze trees, place tags, break off twigs, or tie knots in clumps of grass to mark your route, you are lacking in bush navigation skills. Placing signposts and permanent markers of any kind is the responsibility of the relevant land manager (such as the NPWS).

Watch your safety

- Know what to do in emergencies. Rescue operations often cause serious damage, so take care to avoid the need for rescue.
- Be properly trained in First Aid so you know how to handle illness and injuries.
- Carry clothing and equipment to suit the worst possible conditions you are likely to encounter.
- Carry a mobile phone if you want to, but use it only for summoning aid in an emergency. Keep it switched off until needed.

Pack it in, pack it out

- Don't carry glass bottles and jars, cans, drink cartons lined with aluminium foil and excess packaging. If you can't resist carrying such things, don't leave them in the bush. Remember, if you can carry a full container in, you can easily carry the empty one out.
- Remove all your rubbish including food scraps, paper, plastic, aluminium foil and empty containers. Don't burn or bury rubbish. Burning creates pollution and buried rubbish may be dug up and scattered by animals.
- Digging also disturbs the soil, causing erosion and encouraging weeds.

- Carry a plastic bag for your rubbish. If you find litter left by irresponsible people along the track or around a campsite, please remove it. Show you care for the environment, even if others don't.
- When walking in scrubby country, do not strap closed-cell sleep mats or items in plastic bags outside your pack. The bush will be littered with pieces of foam and plastic.

Be hygienic

- Ensure you are at least 50 metres from campsites, creeks and lakes, when going to the toilet. Wait until you get out of sensitive areas such as caves and canyons before defecating or urinating.
- Bury all faeces and toilet paper at least 15cm deep. In snow, dig through the snow first, then dig a hole in the ground.
- Carry out things that won't easily decompose, such as used tampons, sanitary pads and condoms.
- Carry a lightweight plastic trowel or a large aluminium tent peg to make digging easier.

Keep water pure

- Wash cooking and eating utensils well back from the edge of lakes and creeks so waste water falls on soil where it will be absorbed.
- Prevent soap, detergent or toothpaste from getting into natural water systems. Similarly, when washing cooking utensils, don't use detergent and don't let oils and food scraps get into creeks or lakes.
- Always swim downstream from where you get your drinking water.

Be VERY careful with fire

- Have a fire only when you are absolutely certain you can light it with safety. A fuel stove is preferable for cooking and thermal clothing is better for warmth.
- Always use a fuel stove in places where even a tiny fire may cause permanent damage. Places where fire lighting should be avoided include many rainforest and all alpine regions.
- Do not light fires: in hot, summer conditions - in dry windy weather - in declared 'fuel stove only' areas - when there is a declared fire ban.
- Always remember- Fire doesn't destroy aluminium foil, and plastics release toxic gases when burnt. So carry foil and plastics out in your pack with all your other rubbish, including food scraps. Don't use your campfire as a rubbish incinerator.
- If you light a campfire, follow these rules-In popular campsites, light your fire on a bare patch left by previous fires. Don't light it on fresh ground.
- Light your fire on bare soil or sand, well away from stumps, logs, living plants and river stones (which may explode when heated).
- Definitely **don't** build a ring of stones as a fireplace. This is unnecessary and unsightly. Dismantle stone rings wherever you find them.
- Sweep away all leaves, grass and other flammable material for at least two metres around your fireplace. (Major bushfires have been caused by careless campers who didn't take this precaution.)
- Burn only dead wood that's fallen to the ground. Don't break limbs from trees or shrubs.
- Keep your fire small - remember, the bigger the fool, the bigger the fire.
- Before you leave- Douse your fire thoroughly with water, even if it appears to be already out. Don't try to smother a fire by covering it with soil or sand as the coals will continue to smoulder for days. Only water kills a fire with total certainty.
- Feel the ground under the coals. If it is too hot to touch, the fire is not out. Douse it some more.
- Scatter the cold charcoal and ashes well clear of your campsite, then rake soil and leaves over the spot where your fire was. You should aim to remove all trace of it.

Choose campsites carefully

- Think twice about using a popular campsite to avoid overuse. If possible, vary your route slightly so you can find an alternative site in a less frequented area.

- Find an open space to erect your tent so it is unnecessary to clear vegetation. In difficult overgrown areas, trample undergrowth flat rather than pull plants out of the ground. A trampled spot soon recovers.
- Use a waterproof groundsheet or tent with a sewn-in floor and you won't have to worry about surface runoff in wet weather. Avoid the temptation to dig drains around your tent. This practice damages the environment and is not acceptable
- If you have to remove branches or rocks to create a tent site, replace them before you leave.
- Leave your campsite pristine. After a few days it should be impossible to see where you were camped.

Protect Plants and Animals

- Try not to disturb wildlife. Remember, you are the trespasser.
- Give snakes a wide berth and leave them alone. They have more right to be there than you do.
- Watch where you put your feet. Walk around delicate plants.
- Don't feed birds and animals around campsites or they may become pests. Unnatural food can be harmful to many species.

Respect Indigenous heritage

- Many places have spiritual or cultural significance for our Indigenous communities. Treat such places with consideration and respect.
- Obtain permission from traditional landowners or the relevant land manager to visit sensitive areas.
- Leave Indigenous relics as you find them. Don't touch paintings or rock engravings.

Be courteous to Others

- The sound of radios, CD players, mobile phones and similar devices is out of place in the natural environment. Leave the electronics at home. (See note under Safety concerning the acceptable use of mobile phones.)
- Ensure your behaviour and activities don't disturb or offend others.
- Camp as far away from other groups as conditions allow. Don't use another group's campfire without permission.
- Leave gates and slip rails as you find them. When you open a gate, make sure the last person through knows it has to be closed.
- Respect the rights of landholders and land managers. Don't enter private property without permission. In national parks, abide by plans of management and encourage others to do so too.

When in camp

- Do your share of getting firewood and water. When breaking camp, help to remove the remains of your fire (if you had one) and clean up the site.
- Don't throw rubbish on a fire where people are cooking. In fact, don't throw rubbish on a fire at all; carry it out with you. (See section: Pack it in, Pack it Out.)
- Don't step over other people's uncovered food.
- Offer what is required to help others in need. This could be your leader, who may be carrying group safety items, someone in the group who has injured themselves, or forgotten their billy, or another group who may not have communications to summon emergency medical aid. Recognise that some individuals may need your help but will never ask for it. Volunteer it.

Walk safely, walk with a club.

***Take nothing but happy memories and photographs - leave nothing but footprints.
Minimal Impact Bushwalking means do nothing, leave nothing that shows where you have been.***