

Enjoy Your Hiking – Safely

Leadership

Every party must have a capable leader. Party members must support one another and the leader. The leader must know what equipment each member takes. He or she must arrange, check and allocate party gears and keep the member informed about the routes and trip details. In parties larger than four, appoint a tail hiker to safeguard against stragglers. Keep the party together.



Party Strength

A safe number for a party depends on the nature of the country to be traversed. Four is the minimum number for safety. The speed of the slowest member determines the speed of the party. Make halts regular but not prolonged, at well selected intervals. Move steadily with rhythm for economy of effort. Make an early start each day, to allow plenty of time for any eventualities. Don't relax proper safety precautions, especially at the end of a hard day.



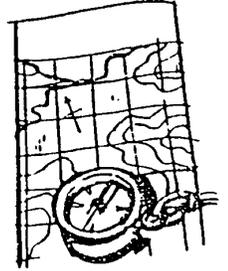
Planning

When planning your trip, make sure it is within the capabilities of every member of the party. Learn about the area thoroughly from maps and photographs and from people who have been there. Let local experts or other reliable people know what your plans are. Obtain necessary permits and/or landowner's permission well in advance. Fitness is essential for enjoyable and safe hiking.



Route Finding

Before setting out, study the map of the country to be traversed. Map and compass should always be carried. Better progress will be made by following a ridge or a valley floor. A leading spur will provide travelling from the valley to the tops. In untracked country use a compass with a map, keep the party together and move purposefully. Be observant.



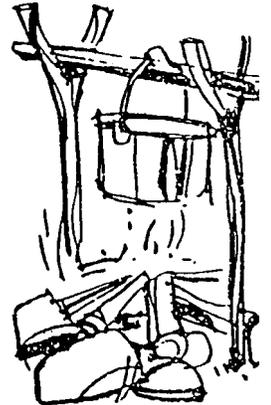
Food and Equipment

Make sure your food is satisfactory - sufficient in energy value and appetizing. Concentrate on lightness with variety. Take sufficient warm clothing (wool is best), together with outer garments to protect against rain, wind and snow. Have an adequate first aid kit and know how to use it. Carry your survival kit at all times. Check the condition of your gear. To be comfortable and safe, you must have good food, adequate clothing and sound equipment.



Camping and Firefighting

Choose camp site carefully on well drained land. Avoid land likely to flood in heavy rain. Look for shelter from prevailing winds. If you have no tent, shelter under overhanging rocks or fallen trees. A simple bivouac can quickly be made from a plastic sheet - one should be contained in your survival kit. Keep matches in a watertight container and carry a small piece of candle. Know how to light a fire under any conditions. Keep food and personal gear in light plastic bags. A carefully chosen, well prepared camp site adds enjoyment to safe hiking.



River Crossing

All river crossings must be carefully considered. Choose the easiest available ford. If the river is in flood and dangerous, camp and wait rather than attempt a crossing to maintain a time programme. A high-level route may alleviate a crossing. A river crossing may be made with mutual support but a rope should always be carried as a safeguard in river work. It is essential to use a recognised safe method for all river crossings. Avoid over-confidence.



Exposure

Exposure can be your worst enemy. Learn to recognise symptoms of exposure in behaviour and speech. Beware particularly of wind, especially in fog or rain. Recognise local weather signs and allow a wide margin of safety. Be alert and concentrate on what you are doing on snow, ice and work. Avoid exposure by travelling out of wind wherever possible. Wear adequate protective clothing and eat plenty of snacks and sweets. No alcohol should be consumed. When any member of the party shows signs of exposure, make a shelter away from the wind or get to lower ground.

