

CBC Prospective Walk Leaders Information Night

The following points are fairly comprehensive. Not all points apply to every walk. Planning and execution is easy – just ‘walk’ through in your mind what needs to happen, from beginning to end.

1. Planning

a. Set a goal

It might just be to successfully lead your first CBC trip (if so, perhaps choose a track walk to simplify navigation)! Views, flora and fauna, geology, history, sites, swims, peak bagging, records/pb. Special ‘walks’ such as snowshoe, kayak, mountain bike ride, canyoning, descending cascades.

b. Research the area and general route

Maps (topographic/orthographic), previous walk reports (CBC *it*, other sources), brochures, guidebooks, Google Earth, talk to other walkers, internet.

c. Length/time

Daylight hours (calculator at <http://www.ga.gov.au/geodesy/astro/sunrise.jsp>), travel time.

d. Terrain and other considerations

Tracks, footpads. Spurs, ridges, creek lines. Handrails. Generally damper on South and East facing slopes; generally dryer on North and West facing slopes. An ‘A’ walk (up in the morning, down in the afternoon) is preferable to a ‘V’ walk (down in the morning, up in the afternoon), but the latter is unavoidable if you are visiting a gorge. Try to plan a circular walk, rather than out and back the same route.

e. Seasonal considerations

Daylight hours, clothing, heat/cold. Mountains/sea/swims in summer. Access can be difficult in winter; snow, blizzards. Temperature decreases by about 1°C (perhaps 3/4°C) for every 100m climbed. Wind chill. Bush fires. Water. Cancel a walk if extreme conditions are forecast at the last moment.

f. Party size

Minimum 4, maximum 16 (exception for urban fringe rambles). There may be additional limits set by the management authority of the area in which you are planning to walk (eg. National Park limits).

g. CBC grade

Distance	
S – Short	< 12 km/day
M – Medium	12-20 km/day
L – Long	20+ km/day
	Note: in calculating the gradable distance, add 1km for every 100m climbed
Difficulty	
E – Easy	fire trail, tracks, beaches, etc
M – Medium	bush tracks, alpine areas, some scrub
R – Rough	much scrub, steep climbs, rock scrambles
X – eXploratory	
W – Wet	compulsory swims, some river crossings

h. Recce

To be absolutely sure of the route, terrain, timing, etc, take a smaller (remember minimum 4) party on an unadvertised recce. The larger party on the advertised trip will move slower.

i. CBC documents

[Guidelines for Leaders](#), [Leader Registration Guidelines](#), [Emergency Information](#)

- j. Co-leader
Consider using a more experienced co-leader for the first couple of walks you lead, or else seek out a mentor.
- k. Safety
Must carry full map (not a photocopy of just the planned route segment, as factors on the day may require different exit routes) and compass; possibly PLB, possibly GPS; planned exit routes; first aid qualifications, first aid kit. Have the phone number of the CBC Walks Secretary, the CBC Assistant Walks Secretary (the Check-In officer) with you. Carry a notebook and pencil.
- l. Permits
Camping permit, fire permit, permission to enter private property.
- m. Route card
Using all the above considerations, divide the trip into stages/legs (what would differentiate the stages?). For each leg, locate the start and end point, the distance, going, estimated time, navigation aids, points of interest:

2010 03 09 Ridge SE of Gudgenby Saddle Route Card

From	To	Distance (km)	Bearing (°M)	Climb (m)	Going/Comment
Start	Footpad	4.2			Fire trails. Expect views to Mt Gudgenby
Footpad	Gudgenby saddle	2.2	238	260	Footpad start is taped
Gudgenby saddle	SH1481 – knoll 1	0.7	173	160	Dry eucalypt
SH1481 – knoll 1	Knoll 2	1.0	126	90	130m down damper SE face, then up through regrowth
Knoll 2	Knoll 3	0.7	161	20	Down and up again. Expect views to top of Naas Creek valley
Knoll 3	Knoll 4	1.1	113	10	Ridge line. Lunch
Knoll 4	Knoll 5	0.5	85	10	Shallow saddle
Knoll 5	Knoll 6	0.9	100	20	Down 110, up 20
Knoll 6	Meet Old Boboyan Road	1.3	48		Down 150
Meet Old Boboyan Road	Finish	5.7			Fire trails. Possible side trip to Hospital Creek Hut
		18.3		570	

2. Advertising and Taking Bookings

- a. Write up
Factual, inviting.
- b. CBC Walks Program publishing cycle
Covers the period from the 2nd Wednesday of a month. The Walks Secretary calls for entries around the 20th of the previous month

- c. Collect participants' contact details
First time walker? Ask them their walking history, capabilities. If in doubt, ask for a referee – a walk leader with whom they have previously walked. Refer them to [Information for Walkers](#), [Guidelines for Participants](#), [Suggested Equipment List](#), [Minimal Impact Bushwalking Code](#). Address, phone, best phone contact on the day (hopefully mobile), email. Respect privacy.
 - d. Ask participant if they are prepared to drive. Use appropriate vehicles for the roads to be driven (eg. 4WD for unsealed).
 - e. Bookings normally close 2pm Thursday. Remember min 4, max 16.
3. CBC Documentation Procedures
 - a. Web site documents
[Trip booking form](#), [Acknowledgment of Risks and Obligations Sheet](#) (different version for Wednesday walks)
4. Logistics
 - a. Make transport arrangements.
CBC has a fine history of organising transport pickup within Canberra – this is the preferred way to organise transport. Alternative methods are to ask passengers to drive to driver's home; ask all walkers to get themselves to a designated meet point.
 - b. Communicate final details to participants, including weather forecast for the day.
 - c. Communicate the [Trip booking form](#) details to the Check-In Officer as close as convenient to the time of departure.
5. Getting to the Walk
 - a. The meet point
Ensure walkers know each other – either introduce or form a circle and each walker states their name; be particularly welcoming to new walkers; don't allow the tendency to stand in the middle of the car park where cars drive; pass the Acknowledgment of Risks and Obligations Sheet around for signing; phone late arrivals; don't wait for late walkers past the limit you have set (eg. I'll begrudgingly wait an extra 5mins, but prefer walkers to be at the meet point before the meet time).
 - b. Allocate transport
If not already arranged, allocate walkers to drivers; ensure walkers have all their gear; ensure drivers know where they are going; if mobile phone coverage is expected, ensure drivers' have each other's phone numbers. Leave the meet point in a convoy.
 - c. Drive to the start of the walk
Try to stay in convoy; drive safely. Be particularly aware of kangaroos. If a long drive (eg. to the snow), schedule a driver reviver and toilet break at appropriate (and appropriate is usually different for males and females) facilities.
6. The Walk
 - a. Arriving at the start of the walk
Allow walkers time to kit up (some will get out of the car and be ready to walk; others will fuff around with boots, clothing, equipment, disappearing into the bush to the loo). Form a circle and do introductions again – particularly important if it's a large party and there are new walkers. Ensure all have signed the Acknowledgment of Risks and Obligations Sheet
 - b. Walk Briefing

This is critical. Using your map, explain the planned route for the walk. Include the walk highlights (but allow for some anticipation for when they are reached). Detail major rest breaks, water points, keeping visual contact, action if separated from party, where PLB is carried. Provide opportunity for walkers to ask questions. There may be additional special briefings (eg. I have experienced a brief from a fellow walker on the use of his Epi-pen in case of anaphylactic shock).

- c. Setting out
As leader, you lead (at least initially). Appoint a 'tail end Charlie' – no one goes behind that person. If a stop is required whilst the party is moving (eg. to adjust clothing, loo break), the whole party stops. If a very large party, consider appointing 'buddy trios' – groups of 3 who can at least check that they are all there at each break. Count the number of walkers in the party.
- d. Visual contact
It is the prime responsibility of each walker to keep visual contact with the walker in front; it is the secondary responsibility of each walker to keep visual contact with the walker behind. Before any visual link is lost, call out for the forward element of the party to stop and then close up. This can be relaxed at the leader's discretion on a well marked track, where walkers may be allowed to walk at their own pace. However, walkers forward of the leader must stop to regroup eg. every 30mins, at the next track junction, at the top of a hill, at a water point – at any easily established location.
- e. First break
Good practice to have a short break 10-15mins after starting. Equipment can be settled; we usually overdress at the start, waiting for the walk to begin, then get hot as walking generates heat, so the break allows clothing layers to be adjusted. Count the party members at every break!
- f. Other rest breaks
Morning tea and lunch breaks. Water breaks, 5min break every hour. Stop after completing a hard leg (eg. the top of a steep climb). 'Caterpillar' breaks (the front stops and the rear catches up) – but give the last to arrive a spell too. Always say how long the break will be eg. "lunch break is 30 minutes". Always give notification of time to restart eg. towards the end of lunch "We will leave in 5 minutes". Stick to your time – don't leave early; make it clear (in a gentle manner) to a walker not ready that they were given warning and are holding up the entire party. Count the party members at every break!
- g. Party enjoyment
Do your utmost to ensure that each walker is enjoying the trip. Use the particular skills and knowledge of a walker to inform others on flora, fauna, history, geology, etc. Find out something of interest concerning each walker.
- h. Party morale
Do your utmost to engender high party morale. Particularly important in adverse weather conditions. When appropriate, get to know each party member (but leadership, navigation comes first). Morale tends to fall with constant exertion, in the arvo when we get tired. Engender party 'ownership' and involvement eg. welcome interest from others in your navigation.
- i. Weakest walker
In every party there will be the weakest walker. It may be through lack of experience, incorrect clothing or equipment, lack of walk-fitness, sickness, they might just be having a bad hair day. Without drawing attention to the walker, keep a particular eye on them. Keep an eye on any walker experiencing difficulty.
- j. Navigation

As the walk leader, this is your primary responsibility. Use your prepared route card, modified by conditions you experience on the ground. Move in bounds. Know where you are. Accept assistance from other party members when required. The map rarely lies!

k. Arriving at the finish of the walk

Count the party members in! Ensure that all walkers are aware of how much to pay their drivers for transport. If there are cars with unequal numbers of passengers, ensure that all drivers receive the same amount. Some leaders like to have a cuppa or a bite to eat or a chat at the end of a walk; others like to just get in the cars and go. You might consider a walk debrief – how did the party members enjoy the walk? Ensure all cars start before the first car leaves. Ensure adequate driver reviver breaks are scheduled for long drives back.

7. Walk Check-In

Report the safe return of your walk to the Check-in Officer by phone or email, preferably on the day of return but by 10:00am the next morning at the latest.

8. Plan a Walk and Prepare the Advertisement for *it*

Using available maps and other resources, each participant to plan a day walk and an overnight trip. Write up the advertisement for *it*. All participants encouraged to put one or both on as a real walk!

'A good leader inspires people to have confidence in the leader; a great leader inspires people to have confidence in themselves'.

John Evans October 2011. V3

References:

- 1 CBC Leadership course outline (Sept 2006) by Ian Smith
- 2 *Finding Your Way in the Bush – How to navigate and plan bushwalks* by George Carter, Canberra Bushwalking Club Inc, 2007
- 2 Rob and Jenny Horsfield's annual Canberra Bushwalking Club Navigation Refresher Course
- 3 Reviewed by Stan Marks, CBC Training and Safety Officer