



INCIDENT RESPONSE GUIDELINES

These guidelines have been adopted by the SBC Committee to help minimise the risk of incidents on Club activities, and to guide actions in the case of delayed or injured parties, or other emergencies.

For the purpose of this document an incident may be:

- concerns that members are overdue from an activity,
- serious accident/s, illness, death/s, or property damage occurring during a Club activity,
- 'near miss' incidents which could have resulted in the above.
- Family members or others who need to urgently contact an activity participant

These procedures particularly apply to higher-risk activities, including:

- multi-day activities,
- water-based activities,
- abseiling and most canyoning activities,
- activities conducted in poor weather,
- activities graded "hard", "very hard", or "exploratory",

On-track "easy" and "medium" walks have a lower level of risk and will not generally require as many precautions.

LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES

Leaders must ensure that the details relating to their activity listing on the club website are comprehensive and current. If the activity is changed before it commences for any reason, the on-line activity listing should be appropriately modified. If this is not possible, the changes should be forwarded to the *Activities Secretary* by email to:

walks@springwoodbushwalker.org.au

If the location of the activity is changed while it is in progress, the leader should, if possible, inform a member of the Committee or one of the SBC *Emergency Contact Officers* by phone or SMS. The person receiving this information will update the activity details on the club website. This will automatically inform other Committee members of the walk change.

Leaders should encourage members to book into their activity on-line. In the case of bookings made in person or by phone or email, the leader should add them to the on-line booking list. In the event of an incident or emergency an accurate on-line listing of participants will greatly assist search and rescue operations.

Leaders should also ensure that there is sufficient information available about their activity for the Committee to facilitate a search and rescue operation. This is good practice for all activities, but essential for all "higher-risk" activities. The information can be included in the "*Meeting Details*" section of the on-line activity listing (preferred), or sent by email as supplementary information to all participants, with a copy to the *Activities Secretary*.

The information required to mount an effective search and rescue operation is:

- A detailed description of the activity and its route, including the start and finish location/s

- Any special or safety equipment the party will be carrying (note the Club policy that carrying a PLB is compulsory for higher-risk activities).
- An indication of the latest time that contact will be made to confirm that the activity has been safely completed.
- An indication of when an emergency “call-out” should occur - usually this is the next morning for day activities, and at least 24 hours after the expected contact time for multi-day activities.

For “higher-risk” activities the Leader this information should also be left with a “responsible adult”, together with:

- A copy of the website populated Activity Sign-up form
- Contact details for the SBC *Emergency Contact Officers* (listed on the back of SBC newsletters, and on the “Emergency Info” page on the club website) with instructions for the “responsible adult” to contact a committee member if the leader or others on the activity cannot be contacted at the “call-out” time.

Immediately prior to the commencement of the activity, the leader should ensure that all participants have:

- been briefed about any special risks, and
- signed the Activity Sign-Up form.

Upon completion of the activity, the leader should contact their “responsible adult” to confirm that the group has returned safely.

If an incident occurs on their activity, the leader must forward an *Incident Report* to the *Activities Secretary* as soon as possible after the incident – see detailed notes later in this document.

MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Members participating in a “higher risk” SBC activity should, where practical, leave details with a family member or other “responsible adult”. The details should include the following:

- An indication of the latest time that contact will be made to confirm that they have safely completed the activity,
- Contact details for the SBC *Emergency Contact Officers* (listed on the back of SBC newsletters, and on the “Emergency Info” page on the club website) with instructions for the “responsible adult” to contact a committee member if the leader or others on the activity cannot be contacted at the “call-out” time.

Upon completion of the activity, the member should contact their “responsible adult” to confirm that they have returned safely.

EMERGENCY CONTACT OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Emergency Contact Officers are the first point of contact in the case of overdue parties, incidents or other emergencies. They have access to the club membership and activities databases.

In the first instance they will:

- reassure worried friends / family members, and, as necessary check the person of concern is on the activity and the bonafide of concerned parties
- attempt to contact the leader or other members of the party,
- brief Committee members, particularly the *Activities Secretary* and the *President*.

Depending on the time elapsed or the circumstances they will contact the police local to the activity area to commence a search and rescue operation, and provide information on:

- Activity starting and ending points,
- Planned start and return times and time overdue
- Names, mobile phone numbers, any known medical conditions, special equipment carried by the party, etc.

The name and contact details of the person spoken to and the person who is likely to be in charge of the search/rescue should be obtained.

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

If the incident requires an on-going response, this will be coordinated by the *Activities Secretary*. In the absence of the Activities Secretary, the response will be coordinated by the *President* or *Vice-President*.

The Committee will appoint a spokesperson who will phone the nominated next of kin to update and reassure.

In the case of serious injury or death, the Committee will appoint a liaison person to maintain contact with the family, and to offer assistance and to provide insurance details.

Any information should remain confidential within the Committee and *Emergency Contact Officers* until the family or injured party has been consulted and agrees. Depending on circumstances, the Committee may then decide to inform all members of the situation.

Should mass media be involved the Committee will appoint a spokesperson. No statements should be made to the media without consultation with the *President* or *Vice-President*. The role of the club should not necessarily be prominent.

If required, the *Activities Officer* in consultation with the Committee will assemble further information (such as vehicle registration numbers, likely parking locations, the bushwalking experience of the leader and participants, the medical training of the leader and participants, known trouble spots on the route of this activity, alternate exit routes) that will be conveyed to Police.

If appropriate, a recommendation will be made for the police to seek the assistance of *Bushwalking Search and Rescue*.

The *Activity Secretary* will ensure that:

- a comprehensive *Incident Report* is completed by the Activity Leader (or nominee),
- that the incident report is filed in Dropbox,
- that the incident is also entered into the club database, and
- the incident is discussed by the Committee.

The Committee will investigate the incident and identify and implement steps that can be reasonably taken to prevent further similar incidents.

INCIDENT REPORTS

An **Incident Report** should be completed by the Activity Leader (or their nominee) whenever significant injury, illness, property damage or death occurs on a Club activity. It will be used by the Committee to consider any necessary management or procedural changes or that may be necessary.

Any incident referred by a Club member to our insurers (which must take place within 120 days of its occurrence) must have an Incident Report prepared.

There is no standard format for an incident report because the circumstances can vary greatly. The SBC has prepared a checklist of items that may be relevant in the preparation of an Incident Report. See SBC Document – *Incident Report Checklist*.

- **A report should be completed** by hand in pencil or ink **immediately after the incident** to ensure freshness of data.
- Witnesses may be consulted, and may choose to also submit a separate report.
- A typed copy may be made for filing, and this must be certified by the original author.

The Incident Report should be forwarded as soon as possible (or within 120 days at the latest) **to the Activities Secretary**.