

Dalmeny Narooma Bushwalkers Inc. Serious Accident Procedure for Walk Leaders

If there is a serious injury (or illness) to a walker and they are unable to continue walking, the Walk Leader is to follow this procedure. The walk has ended. Your job is to get help to the injured walker, immediately and through evacuation, and to ensure all other walkers are safely escorted back to their cars.

Check the immediate area to avoid further accidents. Ensure there is no potential further danger to the injured member or others in the group. This includes such things as falling trees, rock slips, water currents etc.

Respond to the injured person using first aid procedures, with prior consent if they are conscious. Ask if anyone in the group has medical experience or current first aid knowledge. Use whatever first aid equipment and knowledge is available among the group. Remember the three Ps: preserve life, prevent deterioration, promote recovery. Do not move the person if a neck or back injury suspected. Do not administer food or fluids until safe to do so. Make sure one person is always assigned to stay close to the injured person, monitoring their condition. Record (digitally, if no pen) when vital signs are checked and if any deterioration in condition. Once critical care is assessed, little things may also help, such as using a space blanket to protect them from getting chilled. Be aware of your own first aid knowledge and capabilities and if in doubt, keep the person warm and comfortable until professional help arrives.

Call for help: Appoint a capable person to call for help. Use the local knowledge and expertise of group members to make the best decision on how to call for help. If mobile phone service is available and you believe that a rescue service or 4WD ambulance can come close to the scene of the accident, ask your assigned person to call 000 (using the Emergency + App if possible) and give the operator important details of what happened, and the condition of the injured walker. Make sure you state that you are on a bushwalk with the Dalmeny Narooma Bushwalkers club. The Emergency + App will give your location or use your topo map, GPS device or mobile phone to determine your grid reference location (6 digit number). If using a phone, save a screen shot of the location. If possible, write down the location details or mark your map. Provide the operator with additional relevant location information, such as the closest fire trail, name of creek, or approximate distance from nearest major road. If you are out of range but assess that mobile phone coverage is not far away, ask the assigned person to move to that location if safe to do so, and to call for help. If in a remote location, the club's PLB may need to be activated. What happens will be determined by where you are.

Safety of other walkers: assign the most experienced bushwalker with local knowledge to be the Assistant Walk Leader. Identify the best people to leave with the injured person. Ask all other walkers to follow the instructions of the Assistant Walk Leader, first considering what cars are needed for those walkers staying behind. Determine and agree on the best route back to the cars before they leave, remembering that it may not be the route of the walk. Determine how best to share provisions (water, food, warm clothes etc), focusing on the needs of the injured walker and the walkers remaining with that person.

The Assistant Walk Leader will do a head count of their sub-group, appoint a tail-end Charlie and lead these walkers back to the cars. When the group gets mobile coverage, ring the President or any other Committee member not on the walk, informing them of what happened, who is injured, who has stayed with the injured party and who has left. Give specific details and ask the committee person to pass on this information. Make decisions on how best to contact the families of those involved, especially the close contact or next of kin of the injured person. Ensure someone keeps trying until the family of the injured person is contacted. Once back at the cars and after confirming the sub-group is together and accounted for, ring the Committee person again to confirm your safe return to the cars. It is sensible to ring a third time when you are home safely.

Evacuation: the Walk Leader should stay with the injured person and the smaller group, if possible. (However, the circumstances of the incident may change this decision. If you don't stay, appoint one person to be the leader of the remaining group). What happens in the evacuation of the injured person will be determined by where you are and what help can reach you, as well as the injuries of the person. Once the injured person is being cared for by professionals and mobile coverage is possible, notify the President or someone in the Committee of what has happened to your group. Make sure that they know the names of who is in your group. Ensure your group of walkers get back to their cars safely. Once at your cars, ring the committee contact again with this information. It is sensible to ring a third time once everyone is home safely.