

Guidelines for Venturing Skills Award

The main purpose of the Venturing Skills award is to ensure that you can safely “handle yourself” in a camping or hiking situation, to the satisfaction of the both the Unit and the Venturer leader.

The Venturing Skills is therefore a “foundation stone” for your future as a Venturer and is the only “compulsory” award that you must complete. Once you have your Venturing Skills award, you are considered a “technically competent” Venturer and no longer need a “sponsor” (although you should always continue to ask for advice where you are unsure).

As soon as you are “signed up” as a Venturer scout, you may start on your Venturing Skills award. You do not need to be invested to start. As soon as you complete the award, you will receive a Certificate; however, you will not receive your badge until you are invested. You have until 3 months after investiture to obtain your Venturing Skills award (although this can be extended at the discretion of the Unit council).

This booklet is designed to provide you with the information you need to be able to complete your Venturing Skills award. It isn’t a substitute for gaining your own practical experience in camping and hiking; however, if you know and understand what is in the next few pages, you will be much less likely to have any serious accidents on incidents when you are “out bush”.

You also need to have a copy of the one-page “Standard Hiking Equipment and Instructions” and the one-page guide to the Queen’s Scout award.

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The Venturer skills award is described on pages 18 to 20 of your Passport. Some important points that you need to know are as follows:

Correct equipment for hiking and correct method of packing

Requirement: “DEMONSTRATE the correct equipment to be taken and how it should be packed. Including clothing, footwear, sleeping gear, food and water containers and wet and dry gear”.

Refer also to the “standard” equipment and instructions for hiking at Sandgate Venturer unit (attached, READ THIS NOW). *You must be familiar with these requirements* and your Unit will expect you to take the equipment on this list and to meet these requirements (particularly the weight restrictions) when you attend any hike. If you do not meet these requirements, then you could be a liability to yourself or your unit, potentially even endangering your health or safety, or that of your fellow Venturers. So take these instructions seriously. If you think you need more (or less) equipment, ASK the trip leader well beforehand.

Clothing

Clothing should meet the likely conditions (hot, dry, wet, cold, etc). Always keep one set of dry clothes to sleep in. NEVER EVER get this set of clothes wet, as a set of warm, dry clothes could save your life if the weather becomes really “foul”. If you wake up in the morning and it is raining, you should change back into your wet clothes typically just before you set off again, so that you will soon warm up.

Always wear a suitable hat when hiking. Wear all-cotton clothing (including underwear) for your hiking clothes in our climate, to reduce the potential for prickly heat (skin rash). Ensure your shirt has a collar and sleeves for protection from sunburn.

Do not get worried about making your hiking gear a “fashion statement”. Be practical and wear old clothes that give you good protection from the elements.

Multiple pockets in your shirt and shorts are very useful for carrying all sorts of gear. Pockets should have Velcro or button flaps on them to avoid important items falling out! Expensive gear (such as compasses) should all be on a lanyard and the lanyard should be *tied* to your shirt pocket or belt, etc. Your whistle should always be carried on you, in case you are separated from your backpack.

Do not bring heavy jackets etc for cold weather. Relatively cheap “polypropylene” track top and pants are very light and warm. Multiple layers are far more effective in terms of keeping warm than a single “heavy” layer of clothing.

You will need a waterproof jacket or tough rain jacket or rain coat (preferably knee-length, no longer than calf-length) or a tough “poncho”. A poncho has the advantage that it can go over your pack as well as yourself; however, it will flap around in the wind (a particular problem if the wind is strong or gusty) and can snag and tear on branches etc, especially if you are hiking through closed country.

It is best to hike in above-knee shorts in the Qld climate. Not only are shorts cooler (and even in winter, you generally get hot when you are hiking), but also if it starts to rain, then the water will drip off your rain jacket onto your bare legs, not getting your shorts wet. Long trousers (or long shorts) will become drenched in wet weather.

Cotton “anklet” type of gaiters (with elastic tops) are cheap and useful in keeping out sand, dirt and mud from your boots and keeping grass seeds from your socks.

Clothing should be packed in a separate bag (e.g. inside an old pillow case itself inside a tough waterproof plastic bag) inside your pack. Your waterproof jacket should be packed near the top of your pack so you can easily get to it if it starts to rain.

Footwear

You can use “joggers” to walk it. However, if you are a heavy person, or are carrying a heavy pack, then joggers are not as good as proper hiking boots. Hiking boots have a much stiffer sole, which means your feet won't get as “bruised” walking over rough ground, they provide better ankle and instep (arch) support, have deeper “treads” (which means less slipping), are generally more waterproof and will stand up to more wear and tear. However, whatever footwear you choose, there are two critical points to note:

- Never wear footwear that isn't fully “broken in”. Shoes/boots are “broken in” when they fit your feet snugly and don't “rub” when you are walking. Typically, you will need to walk in your boots for at least about 4 to 16 hours for them to become broken in. Boots typically take longer to “break in” than joggers, as boots are stiffer than joggers. My personal experience is that “soaking” your boots (inside and out) and then walking in them for a day or so (not on a critical hike) will help mould them to your feet and “break them in”.
- Ensure your boots are in good condition and are strong enough to handle you walking over rough tracks, rocks, logs, etc carrying a heavy pack at the same time. *You cannot afford to have your boots fall apart on you in the middle of a hike.* Talk to the Venturer leader if you want an opinion on this.

It is normal to take *only* your hiking boots on a hike. However, a lightweight pair of thongs or (better still) sandals is useful for “around the camp” at night, if weight and space permits. In winter, this could be a pair of “UG” boots. This allows your feet to breath and gives them a rest from the “cramped quarters” of your hiking boots.

If you boots get wet, NEVER dry them in front of a fire or heater. This will damage the fabric, stitching and glue in your boots. If you are hiking, just put them back on wet the next day. If the hike is finished, hose off any mud from the boots, then turn them upside down and pack them with “butcher's paper” (no ink on it) and allow them to dry in the shade. Never put boots away if they are wet or have dried mud on them. Always carry at least one spare boot lace suitable for your boots (note that boots typically need quite long bootlaces).

If you do start to develop sore feet, STOP IMMEDIATELY, take your boots off and if your boots are “rubbing” on your feet, put on some plaster or proper blister/corn pad before resuming your hike. Most people like to wear double (two pair) of socks or extra thick socks to provide more “cushioning” for the foot, and also to reduce problems of rubbing.

Note that many water activities in Scouting require you to wear shoes. Therefore ALWAYS take an OLD pair of joggers for any water activities (but not on hikes).

If you want to buy hiking boots, talk to your Venturer leader. There are lots of traps for the unwary. In particular, it is easy to be sold boots that are much heavier and stronger than required. This is a problem because 1 kg of weight on the feet is equivalent to about 7 kg of weight on the back. So picking boots that are lightweight (but strong) is important.

Sleeping gear

You need a sleeping bag suitable for the conditions you will be sleeping in (summer, mid-season or winter). “Down” (inner bird feather) sleeping bags provide the greatest warmth at the lightest weight and smallest “stuffed” size. However, they are expensive, difficult to wash, and lose almost all their “warmth” properties when wet. The new modern insulation fabrics are generally a much better choice for our conditions.

A bag suitable for Queensland winter is usually also suitable for summer, as you can always unzip the bag fully, or even sleep on top of it. It is the type of tent (and particularly its ventilation) that is more important to keeping you cool in summer.

It is vital that you keep your sleeping bag dry. As a general rule, pack it in a strong waterproof bag as most backpacks will leak when subject to heavy constant rain or when wading through creeks, etc.

It is normal to pack your sleeping bag at the bottom of your pack, as it is the last thing to be unpacked at night.

If you are sleeping in a good quality and “proven” tent with a waterproof, sewn-in floor, then you do not need a ground sheet. However, a *lightweight* sleeping mat or ground sheet will keep you much warmer and also provide a better sleep, particularly if you are not sleeping on grass. Tests have shown that $\frac{3}{4}$ of the heat you lose at night is into the ground, so that insulation from the ground is important in cold weather.

If it starts to pour rain and you do notice some water getting into your tent and you do not have a ground sheet, then you can take out your emergency survival blanket and put this under your sleeping bag to try to keep water off your sleeping bag. Also, use your hand towel to mop up the water before it gets to your bag.

Always air out your sleeping bag before putting it away (humans give off a lot of moisture at night when they are sleeping). Always store a sleeping bag (or any other compressed item such as a sleeping pad) in an UNcompressed state, e.g. put a sleeping bag in a large garbage bag or hang it by its base.

Food and water containers

Never take tins or bottles on hikes, as you then have to carry out the tin or bottle, and unless you clean it thoroughly, it will start to smell and attracts ants and other animals that could damage your pack (e.g rip it) trying to get at the smell. {Tins and bottles are OK on camps}.

Always remove excess packaging before packing your food so there is less to cart out. If the labels are removed in this process, use a permanent marker to mark the items.

If you need to use and re-use certain foods (e.g. powdered milk, rolled oats, Salami, etc), ensure you have some way of preventing spills or contamination. You do not want milk powder coating the inside of your pack and clothes because you couldn't re-seal it properly!

Avoid carrying liquids other than water and fuel in your pack. You do not want a sleeping bag or sleeping clothes, etc with orange juice or “Coke” etc soaking through them!

There are several ways to divide up the “shared equipment”. Often, the food is divided out, with (say) breakfast and snacks being carried by one person, lunch and deserts by another, and the main course of dinner by another. Remember who has which equipment and food!

Often it is best to bring your own “trail snacks” as each individual typically prefers different “scroggin”. The remainder of the food can be catered for on a group basis.

You must always carry 2 litres of water (unless agreed otherwise by the trip leader) and it MUST be in two separate containers with secure lids. This ensures that, even if one container is damaged or lost, you still have some way to carry water, and still have some water to drink. You can survive for days or weeks without food, but only as little as a day or two in summer without water. NEVER hike (even $\frac{1}{2}$ day hike) without water.

The group should carry water purification tablets.

It is a good idea to acquire a 4 litre “wine cask bladder” and deflate this and store it in your pack. It can be used as a pillow at night (blow it up), and is also a spare water bottle/carrier.

If you are carrying liquid fuel, ONLY use the correct type of container. NEVER use an improvised container.

Wet and dry gear

The need for a waterproof rain jacket or strong poncho (not the \$3 paper-thin ones from theme parks!) is discussed above.

In our Queensland climate, it is not necessary to carry rain pants, even in winter. However, if hiking “down South”, then rain (foul weather) pants or overpants may be required. Check with your leader.

Wet gear should not be put into your backpack. Your wet tent and wet bed mat (if you carry one) can be strapped to the outside of your pack. The only other items that should get wet are your rain jacket (tie it to the top of your pack so that it cannot fall off or get torn on passing shrub), and your togs and “towel” (these can be put in a plastic bag in an outer pocket). You wear your wet clothes and hat, etc!

Any wet gear **MUST** be properly dried before being put away at the end of the hike. Otherwise, it can go mouldy in as little as a few days and be totally destroyed (rot). For tents, these should either be pitched (put up) in a dry location, or hung from lines until dry.

Other hints on packing

(See also the “standard instructions” handout).

Ensure that ANYTHING that you attach to the outside of your pack **CANNOT** fall off. Do not rely *solely* on compression straps to hold it on. Ensure that the item is actually tied to the pack so that even if the straps come loose, the item cannot fall off. There is (almost) nothing worse than arriving at the campsite to find that your tent has fallen off en route! You will be most popular with those who are supposed to sleep in it with you!

If your pack is uncomfortable, never hesitate to stop the group so that you can adjust your straps, or re-pack if necessary. Don’t be “macho” – get advice from others if you are uncomfortable about ANYTHING when hiking.

Ensure all the items you need during the day are easily accessible in outer pockets or near the top of your pack.

Keep the waist strap on your pack tight. Try to take as much weight on your waist as possible.

Other hints on hiking

If you are “chaffing” between your legs or buttocks (or elsewhere), ensure you get **EARLY** attention. The best solution is to use a cream such as “Amolin” in the area that is rubbing.

You should aim to have a bowel motion every day when camping or hiking. If you become constipated, you can develop great pain or even become so sick that you cannot continue. Get advice early. The key issue is to drink **PLENTY** of water and also some food with roughage/fibre in it. Drinking insufficient water is the principle cause of constipation when hiking. Also, if you get the urge to pass a bowel motion, then **DO IT**, don’t put it off! If the group has to stop for an unscheduled pause, then so be it!

You need to be able to explain the proper methods of “ablutions” (going to the toilet) in the bush:

- Always use a toilet if available
- For bowel motions, only do these at least 100 m from a water course or the camp site
- Use a minimum of toilet paper and cover the bowel motion (or bury it)
- Wash your hands (e.g. using “wet ones”) after ablutions

*You **MUST** be able to both urinate and produce a bowel motion “in the bush” to be able to remain safe and healthy (whether bush camping or hiking).*

Used tampons should be packed into a small brown paper bag and then inside a plastic bag and carted out.

Tents

Requirement: “DEMONSTRATE how to pitch and strike a tent and fly, explain factors in choosing a tent site and the correct care of a tent, fly, poles and pegs during the journey and on return home”.

As a general rule, a lightweight “dome” tent with a separate “fly” and a strong, sewn-in floor is the best option for hiking. “Hootchies” are often no longer acceptable on many Venturer hikes.

A “vestibule” (or awning) on the tent allows you to store wet backpacks and boots out of the rain (and near to you for security from animals or thieves) without taking these wet and possibly muddy items into the actual tent with you. A vestibule is also most useful if you have to enter and leave the tent when it is raining, as you can quickly get out of the rain, then remove your boots etc, and then crawl into your tent.

The weather is often very hot in Queensland, so that a tent with a full-size “breezeway” flyscreen entry at *both* ends allows much better ventilation than a tent with only one entry. Some tents have the tent portions made totally from “fly screen” with the fly (only) providing the rain protection. With mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue fever and Ross river fever both on the increase in Queensland, protection from mosquitos at night is quite important.

Never cook inside a tent as you can either burn the tent down (with you in it!), or poison yourself (carbon monoxide, one of the products of any type of fire, is deadly and has no smell). If the weather is bad, you should pitch a simple additional (open) fly to cook under. Alternately, if you purchase food that can be eaten without cooking, then at a pinch you can get by without cooking at all, eating from the comfort of your sleeping bag.

Never pitch your tent under a tree with a dead branch above. Avoid pitching tents under eucalypt trees as even living branches drop off without much warning.

Always pitch your tent well off any roadway or track so that even off-road vehicles (or hikers) will not accidentally pass too close to you!

Do not pitch a tent on an exposed area, such as the top of a wind-swept ridge, or in or near a dry gully (which can easily flood in a storm), or at the base of a steep slope subject to rockfalls or near ant nests or bee or wasp nests.

If the tent will be “up” during the day (e.g. for a layover day), then check in which direction the Sun will rise and set, etc, and try to position the tent so that it will be out of the Sun during the entire day. Always leave the tent zipped up and assume that it will rain while you are away! Never leave valuables in your tent if you are not there.

Check the prevailing wind direction, especially in bad weather, and pitch the tent with the opening away from the wind or rain.

Find a level spot for the tent, otherwise all persons in the tent may end up on top of one another as they roll over in the night!

Clear anything sharp from under the tent before pitching. Sometimes, it is advisable to put a groundsheet under the tent floor to try to protect it, as it is much cheaper to replace a groundsheet than a sewn-in floor. However, this means carrying extra weight.

Never pitch the tent where water will pool under the tent floor, as this can easily cause even the best of tents to start to leak water into the tent through the floor.

It is no longer acceptable to cut down timber for tent poles, or to dig “drains” around tents.

Always use the full number of pegs required for the tent and fly. It is very inconvenient to have a big storm in the night and find your tent falling apart because you never put all the pegs in. This means you have to get up in the pouring rain and fix the problems!

If it looks like there will be a big storm approaching, check all pegs are properly installed and attach any “optional” guy ropes if the tent has them (e.g. storm guys).

Always carry at least two spare tent pegs and one spare guy rope (if your tent needs guy ropes). Duct tape for tent repairs should also be carried.

Always properly clean and dry your tent at the end of the trip. Any problems (e.g. with damaged poles or pegs or the fabric itself) should be noted and fixed prior to the next trip. If the tent must be packed away in a defective state (e.g. dry, but with a broken shock cord or torn floor), then attach a strong paper tag to the outside of the tent bag so that no-one else will accidentally take it away in this state. Notify the quartermaster.

Food and menus

Requirement: “DEMONSRATE the planning of a menu, including quantities, for the expedition to achieve a well-balanced meal using light-weight components”.

Refer to the “standard” instructions for a typical hiking menu.

The important thing about food on hikes is that you want food that is simple to prepare (it could be pouring rain), lightweight, compact in space requirements, easy to cook (only requires one or two billies per meal) and is nutritious, especially high in calories.

Do not try to be too “fancy” with hiking menus. Try out a few simple items and then stick consistently to these. An important hike is NOT the place to experiment with a new menu!

An early start to the day is vital when hiking. You should aim to be “on the track” one hour after sunrise. This allows you a much longer morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea break while hiking, and also gets you into the camp site earlier in the day (which may even let you get in a swim!). Therefore avoid cooked breakfasts, or only have simple meals (such as porridge). Also, fatty breakfasts (e.g. bacon and eggs) require more washing up and may even make you crook, as these sorts of foods are more difficult to keep in hot weather!

A careful hiker can get his total food requirement (including trail snacks) down to 750 gram per person per day, except in extremely hard walking in cold climates (where additional calories are important). At the very most, your total food requirement should not exceed 1 kg per person per day.

Ensure you DOUBLE-CHECK food and other essential items before setting off. It is surprising how often some item of food (or the cooker or the fuel or the billies) gets left behind!

Remember that all rubbish MUST be carried out with you. It is totally unacceptable to “burn, bash and bury” anywhere these days. {Burn and bash may be OK, but “bury” is never OK}.

Each hiker should carry his/her own “trail snacks”. Not only does this mean that the “greedy” don’t get more than their fair share, but this allocation ensures that everyone has some emergency rations should the need arise (e.g. they get separated from the others). It is usually best for each person to “self-cater” on trail snacks, as something that is delicious to one person (e.g. chocolate) can be greatly disliked by another.

Fires and cooking

Requirement: “DEMONSRATE knowledge of fire precautions and restrictions and the correct way to extinguish a fire. Show how to light a fire in adverse conditions. Build and light a fire in the open and cook a sustaining, well-balanced meal on it. Show the correct method of rubbish disposal”.

Open fires are generally discouraged on hiking and frequently banned in most of the popular national parks etc these days. This is for many reasons, including the fact that “firewood” takes away animal or plant habitats (animals live in the timber), the risk of fire spreading, and the impact of smoke and “old” fire places on the environment and other campers. In more remote areas, open fires are often still allowed. However, you must ensure that there are no fire restrictions in place (check with the local town or bush fire brigade). Where possible, use an existing fire place. In addition, make sure you clear at least 1.5 m around the fire in all directions (more if necessary), keep the fire small, NEVER start a fire if the wind is strong (and put the fire out if the wind becomes strong), and always extinguish a fire with water if at all possible. Sand will put the flame out but may not put the fire out and certainly won’t remove the heat, which can lead to injury to yourself or others, a problem if the camp site is used frequently.

The best firewood for cooking is hardwood. Softwoods produce less heat and often no cooking coals. Timber that has been laying on the ground for some time usually produces poor firewood (except in outback areas where rainfall is much less frequent and timber decays more slowly).

If the weather is poor, it is handy to have a cigarette lighter to light the fire rather than matches (which may continually blow out in a strong breeze). Chop the wood up so that it is very fine which will mean that it will catch fire more easily. Dead wood still on a tree will usually be easier to light than deadfall on the ground (which will be saturated and often partly decomposed). It is often good to carry a few solid fuel tablets with you for starting fires, if you intend to be lighting open fires. If it is raining, it is best to have someone hold a groundsheet over the firewood/kindling until the fire is properly alight. Light the fire out of the wind (e.g. in a sheltered place). Once started, a good fire will dry out any wet wood put on top of it (even if it is still raining) and then use this as fuel.

Portable (lightweight, hiking) cookers (or stoves) generally fall into four broad categories:

- *Shellite (unleaded petrol)-types of stoves.* These are very powerful (high heat output) and quick, but are hazardous unless carefully handled. Sometimes they do not “simmer” well. They should not be used for Venturer activities without the leaders permission and special training and assessment. However, the fuel is easy to find (any garage) and the stoves can be refilled easily “mid-meal” if required. {Note: Shellite is called “camp fuel” in many countries}.
- *Disposable gas cartridge cookers* (usually butane or a mix). These are easy to use and quite safe. They suffer from the problem that if the container runs out, a new container must be available and the old container “carted out” and disposed of properly. They are also generally unsuitable at below-freezing temperatures.
- *Methylated spirits-type of stoves.* These are relatively cheap, easy to use and relatively safe, although heat control isn’t easy to achieve. They can be refilled “mid meal”. They are probably the best alternative for Venturers. However, they also can have problems in below-freezing temperatures.
- *Solid fuel types of stoves.* These are easy to use and relatively safe. However, solid fuel can become expensive, although the stove itself is the cheapest of all types. The fuel must not get wet and they cannot therefore be used in open rain.

All stoves need a flat surface and a good windshield during cooking. An adequate windshield can be made from Alfoil and can be re-used. Always ensure the surface is stable – if you are boiling water the cooker develops a “lean” and the water tips over you, you can be badly burnt, and there is (almost) nothing more disheartening than seeing your almost-ready dinner tip sideways into the dirt, because the cooker base was unstable.

Knots and rescue devices

Requirement: “DEMONSTRATE how to tie, and the practical use of, four knots or rescue devices chosen by the Unit from the Unit’s activities”.

You should know the following knots and when they should be used:

- *Knots:*
 - Bowline (incl bowline on the bight) To form a loop, e.g. for rescue work or to form a running loop
 - Reef knot To join two ropes, particularly where a neat, flat knot is required (e.g. arm sling)
 - Sheetbend To join two ropes, especially of unequal diameter, under much strain
 - Round turn & two half hitches To join a rope under much strain to a post, spar or rail. OK even when the free end of the rope is not under tension.
 - Clove hitch (with and To join a rope without much strain to a post, spar or rail.

without free end)

Can be attached even without a free end to the rope. Needs both ends to be under tension. Often used to start a lashing.

○ Rolling hitch

An excellent one-way “slip knot” for guy ropes, etc.

▪ *Survival equipment:*

○ Whistle

○ Signalling mirror

○ Emergency blanket

○ EPIRB

“Lost procedure”

Unless other procedures apply for a particular event, this is the “lost” procedure to be followed at all Sandgate activities (whether out bush or not).

- If you become separated from the others, STOP and think first. DO NOT immediately start to run off looking for the others. PANIC is one of the most serious problems when people get lost. Do NOT worry about “What I SHOULD have done”, or “How STUPID I’ve been (or the others have been)”.
- Shout first, and then blow your whistle three times (the international signal for someone who is lost).
- DO NOT MOVE, except to take necessary shelter from the sun or cold. It is the responsibility of the rest of the ground to find you, NOT FOR YOU TO FIND THEM.
- Your team should, as soon as they notice you are missing, return to the last place that they remember seeing you at.
- Your chief priority is to maintain a safe body temperature (not to become too hot or too cold). Use your emergency blanket if necessary. Use it as a fly with the shiny surface outwards to keep the heat off you or wrap yourself in it with the shiny surface facing your body if you are cold.
- Continue to blow your whistle for three short blasts every 5 minutes for the first hour and then every 15 minutes. If no-one has found you within THREE hours, OR if you have any concerns about your condition (e.g. no water, you are getting cold or hot, nightfall is approaching, bad weather is expected and you have no tent, you are injured, etc), then if you have an EPIRB, activate it immediately. Do not hesitate.
- As a general rule, it is best for you to NOT move. If people are looking for you (e.g. a search party), they will search each place and track typically once. If you keep moving, you may go into a region that has already been searched.
- *The exception to this is if you become SEPARATED BUT NOT LOST* (i.e. you know the way home or to a road etc). In this case, you should still wait for a sensible period (more than the time required for the group to find you again), and then mark the direction you have gone (leave a note if possible) and then proceed to safety and contact the local police or national parks ranger to advise that you are safe.

Bush & camping etiquette

All camping and hiking these days observes “minimum impact” guidelines. These include:

- No littering - don’t even leave an orange peel or twist tie behind you.
- Do not damage the flora, fauna, rocks or the environment in any way. Try to leave no impact whatsoever at camp sites or rest areas. There should be no evidence that you were ever there.
- Minimise any noise and there is definitely no “music” or “radio”, etc when out bush. In wilderness areas, even loud talking on the tracks or shouting from lookouts will be offensive

to many people. The natural noises (or silence) of the bush are an important part of the outdoors experience and you should learn to appreciate this.

- Never feed wildlife. In the long-run, it will be damaging to the animal (creates dependency and disease), for humans (the possibility of attack) and for the ecosystem (upsetting the food supply, etc).
- Never wash yourself in a river or lake using soap. Water by itself is almost always sufficient. Otherwise carry the water away from the river/lake, and wash any soap off here.
- Never wash dishes in a river or lake using detergent. Usually, just washing the dishes in the river (without detergent) is sufficient. River sand or gravel makes a good scourer. If detergent is essential (e.g. heavy grease), then cart a bucket of water away from the river and wash the dishes away from the river.
- Always use existing walking tracks if possible. Never “short cut” tracks. Never use a machete out bush. In thick scrub, garden gloves and long trousers or gaiters are preferable to machetes anyway. {Note: even possession of a machete is illegal in Qld Parks, fine \$500}
- Never dislodge or throw rocks or any other item in the bush. If you accidentally dislodge a rock and it starts to roll away, IMMEDIATELY yell “ROCK” to warn those who may be below you. Hikers have been killed by thoughtless walkers throwing or rolling rocks down slopes.
- Do not trespass on private property.
- Always pay camp fees to the full amount that is due. Never try to “play the system”.
- If travelling through a gate, leave it in the condition you found it (if found open, then leave open; if found closed, then leave closed).

Sleep

You need to be fully alert and fully “refreshed” to enjoy your hike or camp.

Ensure you get a GOOD night’s sleep for at least the two nights BEFORE any camp or hike.

Ensure you go to bed early when hiking. It is not uncommon for hikers to be in bed asleep by 8:30 pm or even earlier.

You should agree on a “reveille” time (time to get up in the morning) BEFORE you go to bed. Typically, this should be no later than 30 minutes after dawn.

The “early risers” in the party should wake up the “late sleepers” at least 15 minutes before reveille.

When camping in a public campground, the “noise” levels should be kept low, especially in the early morning and evening. If you need to be up early to get going, keep the noise levels to the very lowest possible until at least 7 am (other campers will be sleeping). From sunset, the noise levels should drop to low levels and from 8 pm onwards, there should be no significant noise from the camp.

You should have a quick breakfast and then get off hiking (aim for 90 minutes after sunrise). The morning is the best time of the day to be hiking and an early start means you can take more breaks, and longer breaks. It also means you can stop if you see a good waterhole and want to take an unplanned swim, etc. It also means you will get into the next night’s campsite earlier in the afternoon, which leaves more time to pitch camp, cook dinner, clean up and even to have a swim or other activity.

Before going to bed, check that everything in the campsite is ready for whatever the night may bring: rain, wind (affecting tents, fireplace, trees overhead), bad weather, animals roaming about, you needing to go to the loo (tripping over things), torch is accessible, pack is inside the tent, etc!

Safety

These are some minimum safety requirements for hiking:

- Each hike will (generally) be reviewed by the specialist district adviser before it is approved.
- There will be a leader for each hike (usually a Venturer), who is to consult with the rest of the group, but who has ultimate responsibility for the safety of everyone and ultimate “say” in what happens. Under no circumstances are you allowed to “go your own way” on a hike.
- Only under exceptional circumstances would the leader allow the group to split up. This is usually when someone becomes hurt, or is lost, and two persons are appointed to go to seek help. No-one ever goes off by themselves. Always stay in at least pairs. Always carry your pack with you.
- You must carry minimum *individual* safety equipment even for day walks. This includes: hat, good boots, water, emergency rations, 1st aid kit (including sunscreen and toilet paper), waterproof matches or cigarette lighter, rain jacket and warm jumper (if not summer) and survival blanket. At least two members must carry a map and compass so that some backup is available (e.g. if a map is lost or destroyed by water), and there is a compass and map for two groups if the main group has to split up (e.g. accident).
- Safety items (compass, jackets, whistle, GPS, EPIRB, etc) should be brightly coloured to aid in visibility.
- If travelling extensively at night on roads, wear light coloured clothing and attach some “reflectorised strip” to your clothing or backpack.
- When hiking, each person is responsible for ensuring that the person behind them always stays in view. If the person behinds you starts to drop back, YOU slow down. Don’t nag them to hurry up.
- About each hour, the group should stop, take a rest, and the leader should check that each individual is OK (blisters, sore shoulders or back, etc). A good guide is to rest 10 mins/hour.
- The group should only walk at the pace of the slowest member. NEVER “put down” someone who is holding up the group. This will destroy morale, which is one of the most important success factors in good hiking groups and enjoyable hikes.
- The first person (up front) should be an *experienced navigator* (usually with an “apprentice” who also double-checks each navigation decision). The group leader should be in the middle, and an experienced “tail end Charlie” should take up the rear. These three vital persons must keep in regular contact with one another.
- When walking along a road:
 - Walk in single file
 - Walk on the right hand side of the road (i.e. so that you will see the on-coming traffic)
 - Move off the road if a vehicle comes. If the road is “dirt”, a vehicle will often “throw up” rocks as it passes, so ensure you protect your face from this (e.g. turn around)
 - If at night, the first person in the party MUST have a flashlight and the last person either a flashlight (facing backwards) or (better still) a flashing red light.

Navigation

Requirement: “DEMONSTRATE how to read a map and orientate it both by compass and by visible features”.

You must be able to demonstrate proficiency in the following:

- How to orient a map using natural features
- How to read a grid reference from a map
- How to find an object on a map using a grid reference
- How to orient a map using a compass

- What the magnetic variation on a map means (magnetic versus grid north)
- What the scale on the map means
- What contours mean and how to read the “terrain” from the contours
- How to use the legend
- How to take a bearing in the field using a compass, and then to plot this bearing on the map
- How to measure a bearing from off the map (between two points) using the compass as a protractor and then to take a sighting in the field.

First Aid

Requirement: “Be able to explain the major features of casualty treatment. Demonstrate: treatment of hypothermia and hyperthermia, treatment of major bleeding, CPR”.

The major principles of casualty treatment are (DRABC):

- **Danger:** Ensure you are not putting yourself into danger (give an example of danger)
Ensure the patient is not in further danger (give an example of further danger)
- **Response:** Check if the patient gives a response to your shouting or shaking
- **Airway:** Check the patient’s airway is not blocked (what can block it? how to clear it?)
- **Breathing:** Check if the casualty is breathing (how?)
- **Circulation:** Check for blood circulation (how?)

Hypothermia (low body temperature):

- The critical issue is to warm up the patient.
- Get the patient out of the rain and/or wind (e.g. pitch a tent *immediately* and get them inside or wrap them *immediately* in an emergency blanket etc)
- Remove wet clothing and replace with dry clothing OR if clothing is dry, add more clothing
- Put them inside a dry sleeping bag (with a healthy warm person also inside)
- Give warm/hot drinks if they are conscious
- If possible, start a fire to help get them warm
- Give high energy foods if conscious (e.g. chocolate or other high energy trail snacks)

Hyperthermia (high body temperature):

- The critical issue is to cool the patient.
- Remove from the Sun or heat
- Remove excess clothing, hat, boots and socks
- Pour water on them
- Fan them with a hat
- Give cool drinks if they are conscious

In either case, if they lose consciousness, put them in the recovery position (demonstrate) and check DRABC regularly. Summon emergency help if at all possible (e.g. EPIRB or mobile phone).

If necessary, administer CPR.

CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation)

- Only start CPR after using DRABC.
- Put the person on their **BACK** on a **HARD SURFACE**
- **LIFT THEIR HEAD BACK (CHIN UP)** to open the airway
- Blow air into their mouth until you see their chest rise. Simultaneously compress (50 mm) the heart by pressing on the lower portion of the sternum (breastbone).

- For one-person operation:
 - 15 compressions and 2 quick breaths, repeated four times per minute
- For two-person operation:
 - 60 compressions and 8 breaths per minute
- In both cases, check for presence of pulse and breathing every two minutes.

Minor first aid

Snakes

The best “treatment” for snake bite is to avoid snakes. Over 90% of people bitten by snakes are trying to kill them! If you are bitten, it will usually be on a leg or arm. Immediately apply a firm (but not tight) 50 mm or 75 mm bandage over the bite (use your hand until the bandage is available) and then continue to bandage the entire limb as far as the crutch or shoulder. Do not allow the person to walk or exercise. Seek urgent medical advice. Do not “cut” the snake bite in any way or try to suck the venom from the bite. Do not wash the venom off the skin (it will be used to identify the snake). Do not try to catch the snake. However, try to remember what the snake looked like.

Ticks

You should attempt to check (by feel) your entire body surface each day for ticks, especially if you feel any “itching” or have been lying in the grass etc. Ticks can be quite dangerous. If someone becomes “inexplicably ill” when camping/hiking, they should be entirely checked for ticks (including those “difficult to see” places, such as the hair, behind the ears and all other body crevices). Ticks are best removed using tweezers, being careful to also remove the tick’s mouth and to not squeeze the tick in the process. Apply antiseptic cream (e.g. Betadine) to disinfect the site.

Leeches

Leeches are generally fairly harmless, although they do create some hysteria! Unlike ticks, they do not inject any poison into the body but they do inject a blood anti-coagulant (which is why leech bites bleed so much). Applying insect repellent to the outside of your boots (preferably when they are dry), the portion of your socks sticking out from your boots, and your lower legs may all help. If leeches have only “just” attached themselves to you, pick them off with your fingers and then put them on the ground. Be careful you don’t flick them onto your face or someone else! For more “entrenched” leeches, you may need to apply some salty water.

Insect bites (stings)

Remove the sting if you can see it. Stings from bees etc are best treated using cold water and/or a “sting” cream. If further problems develop, use the procedure for snake bites.

Burns

Apply cold water for at least 15 minutes. Then use a “burn cream” (if available). Do not use butter or margarine. Apply a clean, dry bandage over the burn site. If conscious and in pain, offer a painkiller such as Panadol.

Major bleeding

Always check DRABC initially.

Immediately stop the bleeding by compressing the wound using your hand or whatever is available (preferably something clean, but don’t wait).

Apply a sterile dressing (preferably before clotting starts) and then a compression bandage (but not too tight, only tight enough to stop further bleeding).

If bleeding will not stop (e.g. partial amputation of limb or shark bite), then try a pressure point, or if this is insufficient, you may need to use a constrictive bandage. However, this is a last resort.

Award scheme

Requirement: “Be able to explain the awards scheme and list those activities that the Venturer scout may choose to undertake to achieve the Queens Scout award ”.

The critical points to note are:

- To obtain the Queen’s Scout award, all work **MUST** be completed before you turn 18.
- There are four “diamonds” each of which is required to obtain the QS award. Individual requirements in each area are as per the attached handout.
 - Community involvement
 - Personal growth
 - Adventurous activities
 - Leadership development
- There is a wide choice of activities possible in most of these areas.
- In addition, the Scout must be of high character and recommended by the Unit council, Group Leader, Group Council, District Commissioner and have an interview etc.
- You must **STRICTLY** follow the requirements of the Passport. **ANY DEVIATION** from the requirements of the passport may void the tape, and ultimately the diamond or the QS award itself. Therefore, if your proposal deviates even in a minor detail from the passport, or your completion deviates even in a minor detail from your proposal, check with your venturer leader *beforehand*.
- You and your leader should keep **INDEPENDENT** proof for each step of the award (especially copies of each “completion”), as Venturers often lose their passports! The primary emphasis is, however, on *you* to be organised and for *your* record-keeping to be excellent! Protect your passport and always keep it in a safe place.
- In most cases, the process for a “tape” is as follows:
 - *You* discuss the proposal and the choice of examiner with your Venturer leader
 - *You* put a proposal using the correct form to your Unit Council
 - The Venturer leader will then check that the examiner knows exactly what is required
 - *You* obtain approval of the proposal by your UC **before** you start the activity
 - In some cases, *you* need
 - approval by the DVSC of the examiner (only)
 - approval by the DVSC of the proposal (before completion)
 - approval by the DVSC of the completion
 - notification to the DVSC of the proposal or completionTherefore it is critical that you know exactly who needs to approve what and when!
 - *You* undertake the activity and *you* obtain sign-off by the examiner
 - *You* put the “completion” back through the UC (and the DVSC if required)
 - In any case where anything needs to go to the DVSC, it will need to go to the UC beforehand. Therefore you **MUST** keep track of when UC and DVSC meetings are being held, and prepare a list of your own proposals, notifications and completions for each meeting.

- Note that YOU must ensure that the minutes of the UC and/or DVSC include approval of your activity and examiner (if required) or your completion. Both these minutes and *your* proposal form must be properly signed off by the Unit or DVSC secretary or chairman as required or your tape, diamond or QS award could be rejected later on.