

# Minimal Impact Bushwalking Code

*Be prepared and informed!*

If you have suggestions, please contact any member of the committee

The need for long tracts of duckboard in the popular walking areas of Kosciuszko and elsewhere (to control erosion and damage to plant species), discarded drink cans and ugly campfire rings piled with tins and bottles, all testify to the impact recreationists have had on the environment.

In earlier generations care for the environment did not seem to matter much. We threw our cans on the fire or buried them. Now it is different. There are so many more people using wilderness areas. The code below, compiled from several resources, will help us to protect the wilderness that provides us with so much pleasure.

## Campsites

- Use an existing campsite rather than make a new one in the same area. Setting up camp will be easier and additional ground cover will not be damaged. Leaders should limit the size of their party, especially in sensitive areas.
- Bring your own tent poles or use dead timber. Never cut live trees for poles.
- Use of sensitive areas requires special care. Do not camp in the catchments of glacial lakes.

## Campfires

- Fires should not be lit in sensitive areas, such as sub-alpine regions. Stoves must be used in high-use areas (note: in some areas, for example Tasmania, legislation prescribes "stove only" areas).
- Use established firesites wherever possible. Distribute ashes and unused firewood. Spread leaf litter or soil over the firesite. In sandy soil bury ashes.
- Use only fallen, dead wood for fires.
- Don't make fires near trunks of trees, on roots, on peaty soil, or where the fire could spread. Clear all leaves, grass and other flammable materials from within two metres of the firesite.
- Do not use soil or sand to try and extinguish the fire. Quench the fire completely with water. Keep water handy to control the fire should it spread.
- Be mindful of the weather. Don't light fires in hot summer conditions or on dry windy days. Don't even think of lighting a fire or stove during a total fire ban!
- Don't burn or bury rubbish, including food scraps. Take it out with you!
- Exercise care with stoves. Do not allow excess pressure which may cause safety valve ignition.

## Sanitation

- If there's a toilet, don't wait. Use it.

- Bury human wastes in holes at least 15-20 cm deep. Take a trowel and dig a small hole well away, at least 50 metres, from any open water.
- If in snow burn toilet paper after use (or use snow!).
- Disposal of human waste at heavily-used campsites requires more effort. Go much farther away!
- Wash well away from streams and ensure that soap, detergents and food refuse do not enter watercourses. When cleaning utensils use gritty sand rather than soap.

## **Rubbish**

- Apply the "carry in, carry out" rule. This applies to orange peel, fruit cores, sanitary items, seeds and egg shells. Remember to take some plastic bags.
- Before leaving a lunch spot or campsite check that no rubbish is left.
- Please pick up other people's rubbish.

## **Tracks and Routes**

- Go in small parties and tread carefully to avoid damaging vegetation. Use stepping stones in eroded areas if available.
- Limit walking in areas that have been over-used.
- Minimise walking on loose ground, scree slopes, dunes, marshes and bogs.
- Keep to marked or formed tracks. Do not take short cuts on zig-zag tracks.
- Where a track is waterlogged, walk through the water, don't widen the track by walking around it.

## **Flora and Fauna**

- Native flora and fauna should be left undisturbed.
- Give snakes a wide berth - do not kill them.
- Do not take domestic animals on walks.
- Report sightings of feral animals, illegal forest grazing or illegal use of protected areas (eg. wood cutting or removal of rocks) to park or forest authorities as appropriate.

## **Historical and cultural sights**

- Treat Indigenous places with consideration and respect.
- Don't touch historical or cultural structures and artefacts.

## **Noise**

- Mobile phones can be used for getting help in an emergency, but should be switched off until needed.

Further Information:

Confederation of New South Wales' Bushwalking Club Inc, *Bushwalking Code*:

[www.bushwalking.org.au/~documents/Policies/Confed-Bushwalking%20Code%202004-02.pdf](http://www.bushwalking.org.au/~documents/Policies/Confed-Bushwalking%20Code%202004-02.pdf)

Leave No Trace Australia, *Skills and Ethics Skills Australia*:

[www.lnt.org.au/documents/private/Australia\\_SkillsEthicV3.pdf](http://www.lnt.org.au/documents/private/Australia_SkillsEthicV3.pdf)