

Operational policy

Visitor Management

Bushwalking Registration

Operational policies provide a framework for consistent application and interpretation of legislation and for the management of non-legislative matters by the Environmental Protection Agency, (incorporating the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service). Operational policies are not intended to be applied inflexibly in all circumstances. Individual circumstances may require a modified application of policy.

Policy subject

How will Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service manage remote or off-track bushwalking in QPWS managed areas?

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a mechanism for visitor monitoring and to potentially minimise the occasions when unnecessary official searches are undertaken for overdue bushwalkers.

Background

In many QPWS managed areas it is not necessary for bushwalkers to get approval from QPWS before going bushwalking, although a permit to camp is required if people intend to stay overnight. This limits the opportunity to gather valuable data on numbers of bushwalkers and where they intend to go. Therefore, the practice of providing and encouraging the use of a “bushwalking registration form” has been introduced in all areas where day and overnight off-track bushwalking on unmarked trails is undertaken. The primary objective for QPWS is visitor monitoring and QPWS does not use these forms to check if bushwalkers have returned from a trip.

Remote or off-track bushwalking is inherently risky because the risks in a bush environment cannot be removed; they are part of the “setting”. The setting may be the reason a person chooses to bushwalk in that area and can be used as guide to the level of risk a person assumes.

Policy statement

QPWS encourages the use of a bushwalking registration form in all areas where day and overnight off-track bushwalking occurs. The attached form provides a model document.

QPWS will not use these forms to check the safe return of walkers.

Where possible QPWS will recommend that people intending to undertake a remote or off-track bushwalk call the local QPWS office at least a week prior to leaving and explain details of the planned walk. This is both a courtesy call and a chance for QPWS to pass on information of any dangers, restrictions or regulations placed on the area.

Persons voluntarily undertaking remote or off-track bushwalking assume responsibility for any injury or misfortune that could be expected to be encountered in the “setting” through which they are walking.

Where a copy of a completed registration form is received at a QPWS office, it is to be kept on file and made available to police in the event of a search and/or rescue operation.

Increased impacts on cultural or natural resources or increased risk to the participants or the public may lead QPWS to regulate the entry into certain areas.

Approved By

Alan Feely

Signature

09 September 2007

Date

Alan Feely
Executive Director, Parks Division

Disclaimer:

While this document has been prepared with care it contains general information and does not profess to offer legal, professional or commercial advice. The Queensland Government accepts no liability for any external decisions or actions taken on the basis of this document. Persons external to the Environmental Protection Agency should satisfy themselves independently and by consulting their own professional advisors before embarking on any proposed course of action.

Bushwalking registration form

(state managed area)
(local Service contact details)

Please complete this form if you intend undertaking an extended walk on class 5 or 6 tracks or off the walking track system (add any additional information specific to the managed area). By completing this form you will provide important visitor use information which will help the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service manage (specify managed area).

You are **strongly advised** to leave these details with a friend, relative or a person at the accommodation centre where you are staying. You are responsible for advising this contact person of your safe return. If this person is concerned about your safety, they should contact the police.

A copy of this form must also be left with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service at (explain where form should be left/faxed).

Please note: The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service will not check you have returned from your trip. If you are reported overdue, the form can provide important information for search authorities.

USE CAPITAL LETTERS

Name of party leader: _____

Home address: _____

_____ **Phone:** _____

Date: _____ **Mobile:** _____

Number in party: _____

Number by age group: under 10 _____; 11-17 _____; 18-35 _____; 36-50 _____; 50+ _____

Name of group (if applicable): _____

Experience level: _____

Local address/accommodation: _____

_____ **Phone:** _____

Vehicle registration: _____

Vehicle make and colour: _____

Vehicle parking location: _____

Proposed route including destinations and camping sites:

DAY 1 _____

DAY 2 _____

DAY 3 _____

DAY 4 _____

Start date and time (am/pm): _____

Intended finishing date and time (am/pm): _____

Independent contact name, address and telephone number (visitors from overseas must provide an Australian contact):

Name of contact: _____

Home address: _____

_____ **Phone:** _____

Before leaving for your walk, please tick the following checklist to indicate you are equipped and experienced to undertake your trip.

- ☐ I am aware of bushwalking safety principles.
- ☐ I am not walking alone. (A party of at least three people is desirable.)
- ☐ Someone will miss me if I don't return at the expected time. I have notified an independent contact person (details above) and will let them know when I return. They understand they should contact police if I am hours/days overdue.
- ☐ I am fully briefed on where I am going and have planned my route.
- ☐ I am carrying a map and compass and know how to use them.
- ☐ I am carrying an EPIRB (electronic positioning beacon) and know to use it only as a last resort.
- ☐ I am carrying extra food and water in case of unexpected delay.
- ☐ All party members are carrying a first-aid kit with an emergency "space blanket".
- ☐ I am capable of providing basic first aid.
- ☐ All party members are equipped with suitable hiking gear including warm and waterproof clothing and sturdy footwear.
- ☐ I understand what risks I might encounter by walking in this area and how to avoid these risks. I know that I should: (insert relevant points below, for example:)
 - ☐ avoid snakes, don't provoke them and detour around them.
 - ☐ keep clear of waterways potentially inhabited by crocodiles.
 - ☐ beware of marine stingers in season.
 - ☐ not attempt to cross flooded creeks or rivers.
 - ☐ keep clear of cliff edges and waterfalls.
 - ☐ wear a hat and sunscreen and avoid heat stroke.
 - ☐ drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.
 - ☐ never jump or dive into water.
 - ☐ never feed wildlife.

Signature of group leader:

Date: _____