

GIRL GUIDE LIGHTWEIGHT HIKING

BY FRANCES CHATTERTON

(Please read in conjunction with Planning a Lightweight Expedition)

Girl Guide lightweight hiking is not only possible, it's the only way to go.

When I go lightweight hiking I want the girls to have fun and I want to have fun and enjoy the hike. But I don't look forward to taking care of their complaints and aching backs. To ensure we all have an enjoyable hike the girls should have some basic knowledge of lightweight camping and have practical demonstrations provided. Girls should be instructed, possibly on a day training in the use of lightweight camping equipment, food preparation, personal hygiene in the bush, navigation and route planning, safety practices, first aid and group skills.

First step is to discuss with the other experienced leaders in our region where we would go. Having decided to do a hike at Mt Paluma (we were all ready familiar with the area therefore we didn't need to reconnoitre the area) we then did the most important part – we started planning early. Permits were obtained for camping in national parks and the forestry reserve. A risk assessment was completed for the route. This assessment identified the major risks and hazards and made judgements as to the likely occurrence of difficulties, their severity and consequences. It will indicate any actions that are being taken to minimise or reduce risks and hazards. An information session was planned to inform the girls and parents of the full details of the location, supervision to be provided, activities to be undertaken, degree of difficulty, the contact system, cost and intended departure and return times. It is recommended that you work with a ratio of 2:10 – two leaders to 10 girls. Group numbers should not really exceed 12.

We made parents come to a required meeting. Mums are critical because not only do they do much of the purchasing of equipment, they're also the ones who almost always load too much gear in their daughters backpack to "make sure she has everything to be safe." Of course, in an effort to keep their daughter safe, they ensure that she'll have a horrible time carrying her pack.

We told parents what was required, and just as important, what was required to be left at home. Parents needed to visualize their daughter not lounging beside a lake for three days, but walking 10 kilometres a day. Once this picture gets clear in their minds, they buy into the need for lightweight gear. We talked about backpacks, tents, sleeping bags, clothes, food, transport, cost and all the usual things. The girls then broke into working groups of 2. This is easy as the tents sleep two so they cooked and slept in the same pair. Menus were discussed and decided. Forms and kit lists were handed out and information sheets completed.

After careful planning, we had that other crucial meeting, the pack check. That's the meeting where leaders check the fully-loaded pack a few days before the hike. This gives some extra time for necessary changes and ensures that all equipment is in good order. This is when we showed the girls how to pack their backpacks correctly so it does not affect their centre of gravity and comfort. We shared out the group equipment amongst the girls. Packs should weigh no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the body weight of the hiker. We weighed the packs on a bathroom scale to ensure they were correct.

Leaders should take a mobile phone for use in emergency situations but be aware they may not operate in all localities. In more remote areas other forms of communication such as UHF radios should be used or satellite phones if available. It is also advisable to take a GPS to use in conjunction with a map and an EPIRB if available.

Before leaving the leader must check the weather conditions and avoid extreme weather conditions including hot, cold and wet. Check the weather forecast to determine what the conditions will be for the duration of the hike.

Details of the hike should be given to a responsible person who will act as the parent contact for the group if something does go wrong. You should also advise the local police station/park ranger/land owner and provide them with details of your expedition.

Expedition Equipment List

Personal gear:

- Socks (for each day)
- Warm clothes for night (Thermals)- if needed
- Underwear (-for each day)
- Rain coat & rain pants (even if it doesn't look like rain)
- Sleeping bag (lightweight), inner sheet
- Mat (lightweight)
- Towel (lightweight)
- Toothbrush, toothpaste (small quantity left over bottom of tube), comb, small piece of soap (left over bit or motel guest soap), other ESSENTIAL toiletries
- Sanitary requirements (+ plastic bags)
- Toilet paper
- Personal first aid kit
- Regular medication (+ dose for an extra day)
- Crepe/conforming bandage (min 5cm width)
- Whistle
- Headlight/ Small torch, spare batteries
- Water bottle (min 2 litre capacity)
- Bowl, cup, spoon, (all lightweight)
- Pocket knife
- Sun screen, insect repellent (can be shared)
- Light day pack or bum bag
- Compass & map
- Mirror – small for signaling
- Pen & paper
- Health form

Optional items you might like to consider

- Camera
- Light water shoes

What to wear:

- Long shorts (long pants with zip off legs)
- Collared long sleeve T-shirt or shirt
- Broad brimmed hat
- Socks
- Shoes (comfortable, protective, in good repair)
- Sun protection
- Sunglasses

Group items – tent group:

- Tent (lightweight)
- Groundsheet/plastic sheet
- String/cord
- Plastic trowel
- Tent repair kit (eg tape)
- Lightweight entertainment (eg cards, dice)

Group items – food cooking group:

- Stove, fuel, matches/lighter
- Groundsheet
- Cooking pots
- Zip lock bags for rubbish
- Candle lantern (or spare battery for torch)
- Water containers (to collect water)
- Food
- Light nylon bag for food storage
- Wash up kit

NOTES:

1. **First aid:** Expedition leaders will carry a first aid kit for the group. However, you are expected to carry your own needs for minor ailments like blisters and small cuts. You are also expected to cater for problems that are common for you. For example, if you know your knee or ankle often needs strapping, or you know you get headaches, or know you have a cough, bring your own requirements for this. Also, you must carry a conforming or crepe bandage, like those used to treat snake bite.
2. **Weight:** The lighter your pack, the better time you will have. The instructors will check your pack and you will not be allowed to carry excess weight. Your pack must not weigh more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of your body weight. So keep items to a minimum, small and as light as possible.
3. **Condition of equipment:** please help by making sure your equipment (eg pack and shoes) is in as good condition as you can make it. If it needs repair, repair it before the expedition, or don't bring it! Carry a simple repair kit containing tape, safety pins, string etc so you can deal with minor problems.

CAMP DETAILS

Date: _____ Venue: _____ Type: Controlled / Wilderness

LIC: _____ Participants: Expected number: _____ Ages: _____

Other information on participants or venue: _____

PRE CAMP PREPARATION

Details of qualified people:

Name	Camp Qual					First Aid		Water		Experience			Other
	I	OE	OB	E	WE	FA	CPR	BM	DR	C	AG	V	

Key: FA-First Aid BM-Bronze Medallion DR-Dry Rescue C-Camp type AG-Age group V-Venue

	Initials		Initials
Notification lodged		Staff meeting/discussion	
		Staff responsibilities OK (all staff initial)	
Info and WACO given out			
WACO forms checked, info noted		Emergency contact appointed	
Health forms checked, info noted		Emergency info given to contact	
First Aid kit checked		Equipment Checked	
Route familiar to someone in party		Safety briefing	
Staff ratio OK (see PO&R)			
		Camp report submitted	

Emergency Plan

In the event of emergency, first on scene tends casualty, then:

Person A _____ Tend casualty: removed from danger, DRABC, appropriate First Aid

Person B _____ Manage group: assemble group in safe area, supervise, direct staff as required

Person C _____ Assist A if necessary, summon help if needed.

Emergency contact person: _____ Phone: _____

Exit/escape points: _____

Communication/emergency beacons carried: _____

EMERGENCY INFORMATION
EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Please make sure your family is given this information

It is not unusual for an expedition group to be delayed, and people often worry about things like bad weather or injury. You may even need to get a message to a member of an expedition. However, it is not appropriate, and often raises panic, if every family contacts the relevant park ranger, or the police.

Therefore, please observe the following policy.

An emergency contact will be appointed for the expedition. Please direct any enquiries to this person. Any messages to be given to families will be given to this person, and that person alone is authorized to call the police in the event of an emergency. The contact person has details of the planned trip, and all the necessary information to be given in the event of a rescue or search, and also details of the emergency plan to be implemented if necessary.

It is important that all communication with authorities is directed through one person. Please do not call the police or other authorities yourself, unless directed to by the contact person.

EMERGENCY CONTACT FOR THIS EXPEDITION:

Name: _____ Phone No. _____

Please complete this information, and give it to the expedition leader

NAME: AGE: (if under 18 years)

ADDRESS:

RELEVANT MEDICAL INFORMATION (ie information that might be important in the event of a search or emergency)

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If you are driving your car: CAR MAKE REGO NO.

In the event of an emergency, who should be contacted?

NAME:

PHONE NUMBER(S):
Or, if that person cannot be contacted

NAME:

PHONE NUMBER(S)

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

To be given to emergency contact person prior to expedition

EQUIPMENT CARRIED

- { } wet weather clothing
- { } warm weather clothing
- { } shelter (eg tents)
- { } sleeping bags
- { } first aid kit
- { } map of area
- { } compass
- { } GPS
- { } EPIRB
- { } whistles
- { } mobile phone No.
- { } other signaling devices UHF radio
Communicators
- { } mirrors
- { } fuel stoves
- { } fire starters
- { } extra meal
- { } extra day's medication
- { }
- { }

Other relevant information

In the event of an emergency, radio communicators will be left on channel 1 as long as batteries last.

Policy/instructions: In the event of emergency, participants have been instructed to stay put, make shelter. If they move (eg to send for help, to find suitable camp) they have been instructed to mark the trail with arrows and/or conventional tracking signs.

LEADERS/PARTICIPANTS QUALIFICATIONS *(number indicates number of people holding qualification)*

- { } first aid
- { } life saving (bronze medallion)
- Guide qualifications in:
 - { } camping (youth qualification)
 - { } expedition (youth qualification)
 - { } outdoor camping (adult)
 - { } expedition (adult)
 - { } wilderness expedition (adult)
 - { } Duke of Edinburgh Instructors
 - { }

ACTIVATE EMERGENCY PLAN

Notify police or Ranger
if we have not made contact by on

Give police/Ranger these pages of information.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

To be given to emergency contact person prior to expedition

Date of expedition:

Venue:

Leader/s:

Names of people attending: (including staff)

ROUTE INFORMATION:

Meeting place/time:

Planned route and times: (attach map, grid reference for camp sites and additional details if necessary)

Activities planned, if applicable: (include escape routes and "what if" options)

Planned time of return:

NOTE: Police will decide what action is to be taken. They will seek information to determine if the group can survive overnight. They will need the information written on these forms. If experience bushwalkers get caught in poor weather they will usually wait for 24 hours before searching. (95% of groups who are late due to bad weather or injury walk out within 24 hours)