



RESPONSIBLE CAMPING

This document incorporates advice from the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service and from Bushwalking NSW's *Bushwalker's Code of Ethics*.

Camping provides opportunities to relax and appreciate the great diversity of NSW. Parties should follow ethical practices to do with the conservation of flora, fauna, rock formations, water quality and archaeological sites. They should also behave with regard for the quality of experience of other people and groups.

For an enjoyable and safe bushwalking experience, plan ahead and take the following precautions:

Preparation

- For shelter carry a lightweight tent or fly, or use a cave or rock overhang (in which case, carry a groundsheet).
- Avoid huts except when weather conditions are really bad.
- Camp as far away from other groups as conditions allow.
- Think twice about using a popular campsite to avoid overuse. If possible, vary your route slightly so you can find an alternative site in a less frequented area.

When in camp

- Do your share of getting firewood and water.
- Don't use another group's campfire without permission.
- Don't throw rubbish on a fire where people are cooking.
- Don't step over other people's uncovered food.
- Find an open space to erect your tent so it is unnecessary to clear vegetation. In difficult overgrown areas, trample undergrowth flat rather than pull plants out of the ground. A trampled spot soon recovers.
- Use a waterproof groundsheet or tent with a sewn in floor and you won't have to worry about surface runoff in wet weather. Don't dig drains around your tent - this environmentally damaging practice is no longer acceptable.
- If you have to remove branches or rocks to create a tent site, replace them before you leave.
- Leave your campsite pristine. After a few days it should be impossible to see where you were camped.

Environmental Considerations

- In popular campsites, light your fire on a patch or ring left by previous fires. Don't light it on fresh ground.
- Light your fire on bare soil or sand, well away from stumps, logs, living plants and river stones (which may explode when heated).
- Sweep away all leaves, grass and other flammable material for at least two metres around your fireplace. Major bushfires have been caused by careless campers who didn't take this precaution.
- Burn only dead wood that's fallen to the ground. Don't break limbs from trees or shrubs.

- Don't use your campfire as a rubbish incinerator. Carry foil and plastics out in your pack with all your other rubbish, including cans, bottles and food scraps.
- Remember, fire doesn't destroy aluminium foil. Plastics release toxic gases when burnt.
- Before you leave, douse your fire thoroughly with water, even if it appears to be already out. Don't try to smother a fire by covering it with soil or sand as the coals can continue to smoulder for days. Only water puts a fire out with certainty.
- Feel the ground under the coals. If it is too hot to touch, the fire is not out. Douse it some more.
- Scatter the cold charcoal and ashes well clear of your campsite then rake soil and leaves over the spot where your fire was. You should aim to remove all trace of it.
- If you are not in a regular campsite, there should be no trace of your fireplace when you leave.
- Don't strap sleeping mats or items in plastic bags outside the pack: they become shredded by passing shrubbery and create litter.

More Information

- Read the SBC document - *Responsible Bushwalking*.