

Club Accident Procedure Guidelines

Sometimes accidents do happen on walks and people are injured. Often the patient is capable of walking out after some rest. The following is a guide to decision making when an injury occurs.

1. Stop and think
2. Do not panic
3. Appoint a person to administer first aid
4. Appoint a person to take notes/reassure
5. Ensure first aid is administered calmly and in a reassuring manner
6. Establish if the injured party member will need assistance or evacuation (see below)
7. Depending on the severity of the injury call emergency services or send two competent people, with details of incident, state of casualty and location of the party (as a grid reference or easily identified point such as a hut), for help
8. Stay calm, look after yourself and fellow party members.

When deciding on calling emergency services consider the following:

1. A decision to self-rescue should not be made lightly as this may aggravate the injury and make subsequent evacuation difficult.
2. From police search and rescue: "if someone has a broken limb the medical advice from Ambulance will always be to evacuate you and get you to hospital asap as there can be other complications. A genuine injury is always a problem in the bush and the helicopter (or other means) will always be authorised."
3. Conduct a thorough examination of injuries before the person is allowed to walk
4. The possibility of shock and undetected medical conditions must be considered
5. Continue to monitor the patient, looking for signs of a change in condition. This may be best accomplished by talking to the patient to gauge how they feel and looking for signs such as slurred speech or unusual quietness.
6. Location of the party at the time of injury. It may not be feasible for the party to provide the assistance required to get the injured person to transport.
7. Weather
8. The number of people in the party and the strength of group members
9. Time of day.
10. Consider the "worst-case" scenario.

(continued over)

If you are in any doubt about the extent of the injuries or the problem is persistent, uncomfortable and cannot be relieved by available treatment then an evacuation should be implemented.

If it is decided to walk the casualty back to transport share the contents of their pack amongst the group. Monitor the casualty closely and stop and provide additional first aid if their condition worsens. Reassess the situation.

If it is decided to evacuate the casualty:

1. Either call 000 and/or set off your PLB.
2. If you call 000 make sure it is on a fully charged mobile phone that has good reception
 - a. Give the emergency service an alternative number if possible (another mobile phone within the party) in case your battery goes flat
 - b. The operator will probably have little experience in remote areas and will be expecting a street address
 - c. Tell the operator your location in reference to the nearest town, national park/state forest, fire trail/tracks and then the name of the relevant map and a grid reference
 - d. Describe the injury and condition of the casualty
 - e. Provide the name of the casualty
 - f. Describe the weather and terrain
 - g. Provide the registration number of the PLB that has been activated and if it is at a location suitable for a helicopter to land (helicopter may follow PLB signal)
 - h. Describe the condition of the rest of the party and how well they are equipped

Whilst caring for the casualty the needs of the rest of the group must also be considered. They may also need reassuring. If possible find tasks for them to do, such as providing shelter and food for the patient and the group.

If a helicopter is expected:

1. A clearing large enough for the helicopter to land will be required or alternatively a large enough clearing from which the casualty can be winched
2. Keep your mobile phone on in case the helicopter crew try to ring you
3. Keep everyone at least 20m from the landing area
4. Layout brightly coloured objects (such as tent fly) so the area is easily seen
5. Have signalling devices (eg. Torch) ready if there is little daylight
6. Ensure the casualty is comfortable and ready for evacuation
7. Have the casualty's pack ready to go in the helicopter
8. If there is not room for the pack in the helicopter ensure they at least have their keys, phone, wallet, health care card and some form of identification on them
9. Provide the helicopter crew with a copy of the first aid notes and note the time the casualty had their last food and drink
10. Ask which hospital they will be taking the patient to
11. Turn off the PLB once the helicopter has left.

Cancel the rest of the walk and take the rest of the group straight back to the cars.

When it is possible advise a club contact of the incident and once home complete an accident/injury form.