

## Hints for patrol leaders at VenMX

For **pre-VenMX preparation**, see the article “How to prepare for VenMX” on the web site.

### At least ONE DAY but no more than 7 DAYS prior to

**VenMX** as PL, print out from the VenMX web site and CAREFULLY **re-read** the **latest** versions of the following documents. If you have any questions about any of these documents, call your VSL or one of the VenMX organisers whose phone numbers will be listed on the web site.

- General hiking instructions, map legend and magnetic declination
- First aid supplies for VenMX patrols
- Navigation risk score calculator assessment tool
- Safety and Lost procedures
- VenMX Point scoring guide
- Rules and requirements for VenMX
- Program for the event

### Meet asap on the Friday afternoon VenMX starts:

- You should ALL be wearing uniform
- Confirm everyone is still coming, or advise the organisers of any changes. Remember you need a MINIMUM of 4 persons and a MAXIMUM of 7 persons to form your own patrol. Otherwise you will be combined with another “part-patrol” to form a full patrol.
- Confirm if you are going as “full pack” or “day pack” patrol. Let the organisers know of any change.
- Check you have all your paperwork, esp the C4 permission forms and money (if not already paid), Venturer passport (if using VenMX for Venturing Skills, Outdoor 1, Scouts own), etc
- Check your transport is OK and time of departure is confirmed etc. Know where you are meeting and how to get there. Aim to arrive early. Traffic can be bad in the city on Friday afternoons.
- Confirm who in the patrol will be navigator, who will be check navigator, who will be doing the field notes and log book, responsible for organising special tasks, etc
- Check you have your campfire skit organised but DO NOT SPEND TIME ON THIS NOW
- Check all your personal and patrol gear off from the LATEST master list on the web site
- Allocate patrol gear fairly around the patrol
- Check items such as tents have all their pegs and poles, fly etc and are undamaged (no leaks in floor etc)

- Check items such as stoves work (try them!) and gas cartridges are full
- Check packs fit well and have no damage. Download the hand-out on how to fit a pack.
- Check you have batteries for the GPS unit you will be provided (minimum of 2 x AA alkaline; more if advised on the web site)
- Put 2 litres of water into your TWO bottles (or bottle plus bladder) and then weigh your packs.
  - All gear (with water) must weigh less than 20 kg when you get off the bus
  - No pack is allowed to weigh more than 16 kg at the start of the day including 2 litres water
  - Average patrol pack weight should be no more than 14 kg at the start of the day including 2 litres water
- Now add into your packs the extra items (“surplus gear”) for the weekend (that you will get back on Sunday night). Remember the total gear weight per person must now be no more than 20 kg including 2 litres water.
- You may have to WALK and CARRY your gear to the BIV, sometimes up to a kilometre away, so don't bring much surplus gear!
- Ensure you have either a “gear bag” for each of you, or a STRONG, large “patrol” gear bag that can take your “excess gear” in the trailer which you will get back Sunday night (Saturday night for day pack patrols)
- Keep out jumper, TORCH, and RAINCOAT and take them with you.

### After getting to the campsite on Friday night

- At the campsite, you will probably be given your “Day 1 Clearance checklist” and the weekend program. Do not lose them.
- Your gear will be weighed (maximum 20 kg including 2 litres water)
- You will need to walk to the BIV site. You will have a limited amount of time to get your tents up. DO NOT WASTE TIME. Ensure you know WHERE you are supposed to set up your tent. There will already be toilets available. There may be lots of people wanting to use them, so BE QUICK.
- Ensure you ALL attend the briefings. There will be a briefing from the overall “leader in charge” and then

a briefing from the “Hikemaster”. The COMPETITION officially starts at the briefings.

- After the briefings, your patrol will need to report to EACH of up to 6 “tables” where various activities will occur. These tables are listed on your Day 1 Clearance checklist.
  - Bring your mobile phones with you. Know your phone number and your “provider” (Telstra NextG, Virgin GSM, Vodaphone, etc)
  - Bring your patrol first aid kit with you
  - Bring your C4 forms with you
- Your patrol can go to ANY table in ANY order, but you must go to ALL of them
- At each table, a box on your Day 1 Clearance checklist will be signed off
- You will probably be told Friday night whether you will be given a “shadow leader” the next morning or not. However, you may not be told this until the next morning. If you don’t know what a shadow leader is, then ASK at the table where this is discussed with you.
- Ensure you keep this checklist for the next morning. You will need it (all properly signed off) before you will be allowed to start walking the next day. Note that only the “tables” are signed off Friday night. The rest of the checklist is signed off Saturday morning.
- Now go back to your tent and carefully read (at least TWICE) the day 1 route instructions and day 1 special tasks. Make sure you have everything you should have (including 2 copies of each map).
- If you DON’T understand anything in these packs or think anything may be MISSING, go back to the leaders’ area and ASK. Even during the walk itself, if you don’t understand a route instruction or have LOST something, ASK at the next checkpoint.
- Plot out your grid references in pencil or highlighter. Do not use biro on the route. You need to be able to see where you are going.
- Read the route instructions then carefully highlight your proposed route. You will need to show checkpoint 1 tomorrow your map with your proposed route and all the checkpoint locations before you can move off. If you aren’t “ready” at checkpoint 1, then you will be bumped to the back of the queue, losing your place.
- **Re-read your Day 1 Clearance checklist and your Program**
- Understand what the “sequence” will be tomorrow, and what gear you will need to produce. Also check you can do the compass checks and map orientation

that is required. Gear your “special” hat or shirt etc ready.

- Set an alarm for tomorrow, although there will be a “reveille” call, but you may want to be up earlier than this (check your program for details)

### **Saturday morning**

- Remember that it is “first in, best dressed” i.e. the earlier you are up on Saturday (or Sunday) and packed, and ready for your camp site to be checked, the earlier you can get to checkpoint 1 and the earlier you can start walking. This means more time on the route, or getting into camp earlier on Saturday night
- **Re-read your Day 1 Clearance checklist and your Program**
- Know at what time you can first “call” for your camp site to be checked. You may need to go to the leaders’ breakfast area if no leaders are there to check you! However, in most cases, a leader will already be in your camp area.
- After you drop your “surplus gear” bags off at the correct trailer (day pack trailer or full pack trailer), continue to the rest of checkpoint 1 with the procedure described fairly well in the Day 1 Clearance checklist

### **During the day (Saturday and Sunday)**

- You should be CONTINUALLY re-reading the current and next paragraphs of the route instructions and special tasks. ASSUME NOTHING. DOUBLE-CHECK EVERYTHING.
- Check the navigation regularly. There are lots of additional hints in the navigation Powerpoint presentation on the VenMX web site and these are not repeated here, but you should know them.
- Always keep one set of maps, route instructions and special tasks in a waterproof folder inside a backpack.
- If you get LOST (or think you MIGHT be), check the “Lost procedures” handout and especially do not panic and do not separate. Remember we will almost certainly know where you are, how long you have been “stationary”, what direction you are going and how fast etc. In addition, if necessary, you have your OWN GPS and your OWN mobile phones to contact the organisers.
- Stop the patrol for a rest every hour for 5 to 10 minutes
- Stop the patrol for a longer (20 to 30 minute) rest at morning tea and a 30 to 40 minute rest at lunch

- Pace yourself during the day. BE AWARE OF PACMAN TIMES and what this means for you
- Ensure EACH PERSON checks into EACH CHECKPOINT and then EACH PERSON checks out of EACH CHECKPOINT!

#### At the end of the first day

- You will have received your “information pack” for day 2 at the last checkpoint on day 1. This will include your Day 2 Clearance Checklist (much shorter than Day 1)
- First priority on getting into BIV (after checking where to camp) is to get your tent set up.
- If it’s NOT RAINING, change out of wet clothes into dry clothes. Ensure you don’t get cold. It’s much easier to avoid getting “cold” than to get warm again once you are cold.
- **If you need first aid (blisters, chaffing, cuts, stings, etc), or if someone starts to get “cold”, GO TO THE FIRST AID TENT. If your not sure if you need first aid or not, go to the first aid tent anyhow. Insist all patrol members do this.**
- Your log writer should not get any other tasks to do; writing up the log is their task.
- Plot out your grid references and route for the next day.
- Check your special tasks for today and tomorrow. Complete everything you can (e.g. panoramas).
- **Read your Day 2 Clearance checklist and your Program**
- Decide when you will be preparing your main meal (for the examiners). There are deadlines in your program. Call for the examiners as you are ready to serve it out.
- A Scouts Own will be held this evening.
- GET YOUR PATROL TO SLEEP EARLY
- CHANGE YOUR PATROL INTO DRY CLOTHES BEFORE GOING TO BED
- On the next morning, change back into your wet hiking clothes. NEVER USE YOUR LAST SET OF DRY CLOTHES (OR SOCKS) FOR WALKING. Always keep these for sleeping.

#### Sunday morning

- Sunday morning is the same process as Saturday morning EXCEPT that the procedure is shorter as many of the checks are NOT repeated
- **Read your Day 2 Clearance checklist and your Program**

#### At the end of the second day

- The key now is to finish writing up your special tasks and log book and get EVERYTHING submitted by the deadline, which is usually 7 pm. This is when the COMPETITION OFFICIALLY ENDS.
- This (the deadline time) is usually also the time when:
  - Your patrol will be given a free evening meal. BYO plate and cutlery.
  - You can collect your “surplus gear” bags (full pack patrols)
  - You can present your (still sealed) mobile phones and are allowed to open them
- After the evening meal, there will be a Campfire which you are required to attend. You may need to review or adapt your skit.
- You are free to stay up late on Sunday night, but please respect those that want to sleep. NO TALKING in the “tent” area. There will be an area allocated for those who want to stay up late.

#### Monday morning or organised activities

- Check your program for the timing of the “Venturer of the mountain event”. All Venturers (except invalids!) are expected to participate. This is only a very short run.
- The rest of Monday morning is “free time”.
- Ensure your patrol camp is packed up and gear packed up, and you are dressed in Uniform, before “final parade”.
- In most cases, you will be getting into the vehicles shortly after final parade. You may have to WALK and CARRY your gear to the vehicles, sometimes up to a kilometre away.