



VenMX Safety and Lost Procedures

GPS, TELEPHONES and 2-WAY HANDHELD UHF RADIOS	<p>If you are overdue at ANY checkpoint more than 1 hour past Pacman times, OR if a member of your patrol is sick or injured or cannot go on, OR if you are concerned that you may not get to a CP before dark THEN YOU MUST:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the GPS to get an exact position fix and plot the safest route to the next or previous CP, or if that is not feasible, the safest route to a road or farmhouse etc. If "lost" instructions are provided for this leg (or legs), take advice from these • Attempt to contact one of the VenMX organisers via a mobile phone (if any) • Attempt to contact VenMX using the UHF handheld radio (if provided)
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Important hints on NOT GETTING LOST and STAYING SAFE

KEEPING TOGETHER	<p>ALWAYS keep visual contact in front and behind with your patrol members. Tell the Patrol leader if you are "breaking away" temporarily for any reason, e.g. nature's call. When 1 person stops, all members of the patrol should stop. NEVER go out of hearing of the rest of the patrol. DO NOT split the patrol up EXCEPT if one person cannot continue and needs <i>urgent</i> help. In this case, two persons (including a good navigator) should go for help. The best choice is go forward or backward to the next/last check point. Otherwise (e.g. if you are also lost), climb to high ground and try a TELSTRA mobile phone to call VenMX Staff. Do not use "000" ("112") except for a genuine medical emergency and where no-one from VenMX can be contacted. Remember that VenMX has satellite phone access (refer to the list of emergency numbers).</p>
NAVIGATION	Learn to read and interpret all types of maps. All members of the party should take an interest in the navigation, not just the navigator - he/she might get lost or injured and someone else will have to navigate. Always record bearings, distances and times walked in a notebook
COMPASS	Have several in the party, preferably one each - KNOW HOW TO USE IT
ROUTE	<p>Gather all possible information beforehand – terrain (gullies, ridges, mountains), vegetation, water supply points, etc Read the route instructions carefully. If unsure what the route instructions mean or you are confused (wording etc), ask for an explanation from any staff member. <i>Do not leave CP1/1 (or CP2/1 on day 2) if you are confused about the route.</i> Follow the route instructions carefully. Remember landmarks. Note times and distances. Look behind and remember views in case you have to retreat</p>
PACE	<p>Walk to the speed of the slowest member. Have a good 'Tail End Charlie' to keep track of stragglers and to urge them onwards. Take regular head counts. Continually estimate your travel speed and travel time and mentally "plot" your position on the map. Does it match up with the terrain you see on the map?</p>
SHORT CUTS	Don't be tempted. Keep to the main track, if any. <i>Short cuts are almost always Long cuts.</i>
LOST THE TRACK?	STOP! Send one small party to retrace steps, or circle around to try to find the track. <i>The small party is to remain within earshot.</i> The main party stays put
POOR VISIBILITY	If FOG, MIST OR BAD VISIBILITY overtakes you suddenly and you are unsure of navigation - STAY PUT. Camp if necessary. <i>Better to be safe in the middle of a fog, than dead over the edge of a cliff.</i>
LOST	<p>If you realise you are lost - DO NOT PANIC. Sit down, have a rest and calmly try to work things out. Try to retrace your steps - but <i>very carefully.</i> If this is not successful, and you can see higher ground close by, head for this to find your position. Climbing a tree might help, but if you are in heavily timbered country it may not be useful. If you cannot see higher ground close by, walk on a fixed bearing with the idea of striking a recognisable river, creek, road, escarpment, ridge, or other long or big distinctive feature. Don't walk more than about 5 km. Mark the trail, behind you. Use small pieces of bandage, etc. - DON'T CUT THE TREES. Leave litter on the trail - orange peel, chocolate paper, etc., stuck on branches at eye level. When you come to a gully or creek, follow it downstream - there is a good chance it will eventually lead to a track or road. Leave a note at the crossing. Be sensible - sometimes creeks and gullies are heavily overgrown and it is therefore better to travel along the side of them. At other times, the gully might be the easiest travelling route. If you are still lost, return to the approximate original position, where you became lost, and make camp on some open high ground nearby. Make a good fire, as much out in the open as possible - visible from the air. Keep the fire burning all the time - smoky during the day - bright at night Never move off if it is getting dark or misty, due to the danger of falling into flooded rivers, over cliffs, etc</p>
SEARCH & RESCUE	<p>Sooner or later, Search & Rescue patrols will be out looking for you. Assist them. At regular intervals, say every ten minutes; stop all talking and movement and LISTEN ATTENTIVELY for about 2 minutes. At the end of this time, you can signal by shouting (which you won't be able to continue for very long) or by giving three sharp blasts on a whistle (using the one breath) repeated at say 15-second intervals. If party A hears a signal from party B, then the party A should continue to signal till contact is made with party B. Do not stop signalling just because the other party cannot yet hear you.</p>
SURVIVAL	<p>Keep your movements to a minimum to conserve energy. Keep in shade or shelter and out of hot/cold wind. If you start to get cold, put as much clothes on as you have BEFORE you get cold. Use your "survival blanket" to help stay warm or keep rain out. Stay together. Keep fire going in cold weather. Ration food and water.</p>