

There is no greater adventure than exploring the beauty of the Outback. To get the most out of your Outback experience, pay attention to some basic safety tips and general information which should make your trip safer and more enjoyable.

## Preparation

- Do a first aid course before embarking on your journey and carry a well stocked first aid kit ([www.sjaa.com.au](http://www.sjaa.com.au)).
- Have your car serviced before you begin your travels.
- Get good quality maps and plan your route. Give family or friends your itinerary. When travelling in isolated areas, advise the local police station of your plans.
- Ensure you have a satellite phone or HF radio as mobile phones and CB radios will not work in remote areas.
- Do not overload your roof rack; a heavy load on top increases your chance of a roll over.
- Secure all items within the vehicle in case of an accident; install a cargo barrier in station wagons and 4WDs.
- Take plenty of water. Check water containers for leaks and carry several small containers instead of one large container; we recommend that you carry ten litres of water per person per day (on extremely hot days, one litre per hour).
- If you are taking prescribed medicine, ensure that you bring this and repeat scripts with you; bring a summary of your medical history with you.
- Carry enough food for each person for two days.
- Pack a hat, sunscreen and insect repellent.
- Bring matches or a lighter and also pack a fire extinguisher.
- Don't travel in the hottest time of the year; wear clothing suitable for the climate (take warmer clothes for the evening) and wear good walking shoes.
- Overseas visitors are encouraged to take out adequate travel insurance.

## On the road

- Check road conditions before travelling by contacting the nearest tourist association or the Parks and Wildlife office.
- If you are lost or your car breaks down, **do not leave your vehicle**. Missing vehicles are easier to locate than missing people.
- Reduce your speed on unsealed roads because traction decreases and braking distances increase.
- Beware of hidden dangers (dust filled holes, soft and sloping edges); never overtake another vehicle if dust is obscuring your vision; stop and wait for the dust to settle.

- Slow down when making a turn to avoid sliding; on unsealed roads, brake before a bend not when you are cornering.
- Avoid driving at dawn, dusk or night; kangaroos, cattle and other animals are active at these times.
- Stop and rest every two hours.
- Avoid travelling in the hottest part of the day.
- Always give trucks and road trains plenty of room; allow at least 1km of clear road ahead when overtaking.
- Never attempt to cross flooded bridges or causeways unless you are absolutely sure of the depth and road damage; most flash floods recede within 24 hours.

## Exploring on foot

- Get local advice about conditions and what you should know about where you intend to go.
- Tell someone where you are walking and when you expect to be back so they can sound the alarm if you do not return in a timely fashion.
- Carry ample food and water.
- Wear a hat, sunglasses, sunscreen and insect repellent; wear good walking shoes and be prepared for extremes of temperature.
- Carry a detailed map, compass, whistle and lighter.
- If it's extremely hot, take salt or salt tablets.
- Follow the advice of tour guides and rangers and take notice of signage at all times.

## In an emergency

- Stay with your vehicle**; use it for shade and shelter; vehicles are much easier to locate than individuals.
- If you become lost while walking and cannot determine which direction you came from, move to higher ground.
- Distribute food and water sparingly.
- If you hear rescuers, signal with three torch flashes and use your whistle.
- Light a small smoky fire with green leaves during the day and a small bright fire with dry materials at night.
- Be prepared to wait.

## Watch for the signs of exposure

- Someone suffering from **heat exposure** becomes pale, clammy and breathes rapidly; an affected person should be sponged with cool water, rest in the shade and drink water with a little salt dissolved in it.
- Someone suffering from **hypothermia** may become slow, irritable, develop cramps, shiver, stumble and have blurred vision; attempt to find shelter from wind and rain, wrap up as warm as possible, share a sleeping bag and drink warm fluids.

## Basic First Aid

The following information cannot take the place of professional medical help; when in doubt, seek medical attention. In an **emergency**, contact the RFDS on the following **24 hour emergency lines**:

Broken Hill NSW	08 8088 1188
Port Augusta SA	08 8642 5555
Alice Springs NT (evacuations)	08 8951 7849
Alice Springs NT (St Johns - weekends)	08 8951 6616
Alice Springs NT (medical advice)	08 8952 1033
Charleville QLD	07 4654 1443
Mt Isa QLD	07 4743 2802
Cairns QLD	07 4053 5419
Townsville QLD	1300 799 127
Western Australia	1800 625 800
Western Australia	08 9417 6364

## Snake bite

- Keep the victim still and apply pressure.
- Do not apply a tourniquet but rather, firmly bandage the entire limb and splint to immobilise the limb; this slows the spread of any venom.
- Do not remove clothing as the movement could spread the venom faster.
- Do not try to force the venom out of the bitten area, and do not clean the bite site, seek medical attention.
- Do not try to identify or catch the snake; the medical team will use a venom detection kit to identify the correct treatment to be given.

## Symptoms of snake bite

Australia is home to 21 of the world's 25 most dangerous snakes. Australian snake bites are often not painful and you may not realise you have been bitten. If you develop the following symptoms, follow the directions preceding and seek medical assistance:

- continued bleeding from bite site
- tender or painful regional lymph nodes
- headache, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain
- sudden hypotension (abnormally low blood pressure) causing partial loss of consciousness
- blurred or double vision
- facial paralysis, muscle weakness, difficulty breathing

## Burns and scalds

- Run cold water over burn for ten minutes; do not pull burnt clothing from skin.
- For scalds, first remove wet clothing, then run cold water over injured area.
- Do not break blisters, cover burn with clean cling film or glad wrap.

## Examples of what your donation can buy:

- \$30** a stiff neck cervical collar to stabilise a patient with spinal injuries
- \$133** a fast track laryngeal airway mask to establish a secure airway
- \$230** an antivenom to counteract a bite from the deadly brown snake
- \$300** a drug that dissolves clots and reduces damage after a heart attack

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