

PREPARATION

SAFETY

Special arrangements may need to be made during the event due to adverse weather conditions or other unpredictable occurrences. In such instances, the organiser will inform walkers of arrangements by text message.

HEAT STROKE

A heat stroke occurs when the body is unable to regulate its temperature at high ambient temperatures. Sufferers often feel hot, dizzy and uneasy, can become unconscious, and in serious cases, go into shock. Lower the sufferer's body temperature and seek medical assistance right away.

Safety guidelines:

Drink plenty of water and take good rests during the hike. Try to avoid being in the sun for too long.

Emergency measures:

Move the person suffering from heat stroke to a cool, shaded place. Remove their clothing and help them lie down with their feet elevated. Give them lots of fluids if they are conscious. Seek medical treatment right away. Give the sufferer plenty of space and use other body-cooling techniques like fanning, wetting the clothing and immersion in water, until the symptoms disappear.

HYPOTHERMIA

Even in summer, a rapid drop in temperature due to a lack of sufficient clothing in a cold place or sudden rain can cause hypothermia. Its symptoms include fatigue, exhaustion, clammy skin, stumbling, shivering, muscle spasms, stammering and hallucinations.

Safety guidelines:

Get a good night's sleep before the event. Rest at intervals. Do not overstrain yourself.

Emergency measures:

Remove wet clothes right away. Cover the head, face, neck and body with clothing to keep warm. Consume hot drinks and high calorie food to maintain body temperature.

LIGHTNING STRIKE

Lightning normally strikes at the highest point of an object and the electric current is conducted to the ground via the least resistant path. Hikers hit by lightning may suffer from muscle spasms, scalding, suffocation and cardiac arrest.

Safety guidelines:

- Listen to the weather bulletin. Avoid hiking when weather conditions are unstable, especially when the thunderstorm warning signal is hoisted.
- Wear shoes or boots with rubber soles outdoors.

Emergency measures:

- Do not stand on top of a hill or near any object with high conductivity. As trees and poles can easily be struck by lightning, remember to stay far away from these objects.
- After lightning strikes an object, its electrical current will spread through the ground. Therefore, avoid lying on the ground, especially on ground that is wet. Squat and minimise your area of contact with the ground as much as possible.
- Do not touch any wet objects.
- Stay away from iron fences or other metal objects. Remove all metal objects (e.g. gold ornaments) from your body and stop using mobile phones.
- Do not touch antennas, water pipes, iron mesh or other similar metal installations.
- Do not touch inflammable materials, such as kerosene or liquefied petroleum gas.
- Beware of strong winds which may be a signal for lightning.
- Take shelter in a building whenever possible.



Walkers should stay at checkpoints if a thunderstorm warning signal is hoisted. Checkpoint staff reserve the right to prevent walkers from proceeding until the signal is cancelled.

HILL FIRES

Hill fires advance rapidly upward and windward on steep grassy slopes in dry weather. Never underestimate their devastating power. Hill fires are difficult to detect in sunlight. Always pay attention to flying ash or the smell of burning. If a hill fire is spotted, leave the scene right away.

Safety guidelines: Except at designated barbeque sites or campsites, never light a fire within country parks. Smokers should refrain from smoking; all cigarette stubs or matches should be completely extinguished before discarding them in litter bins. It is difficult to assess the speed at which a hill fire spreads. Never risk continuing your journey if there is a fire nearby or you may get trapped in the fire.

Emergency measures: Stay calm and do not panic. Never attempt to put out a hill fire by yourself. Escape to a place with less vegetation, but avoid moving in the direction of the prevailing wind. If the fire is close and there is no way out, you should cover your exposed skin with wet clothing and then make for the burnt area. This can minimise the chance of injury.

MOUNTAIN TORRENTS

Mountain torrents can occur after downpours. Small streams may develop into torrents of sufficient strength to wash hikers away.

Safety guidelines: Stay away from streams and stream beds especially at their lower reaches during and after downpours. Never attempt to cross submerged bridges. Rapid flows and muddy water are early signs of torrents. Leave the water course without delay.

Emergency measures: If you fall into a rapid flow, grip onto the rocks, branches or vines near the banks, try to get ashore and leave the river course right away.

LANDSLIDES

Landslides may occur when a large amount of rainwater has soaked a natural or man-made slope during a downpour, or after a few days of heavy rain.

Safety guidelines: Avoid going near or staying around steep slopes. The emission of a large quantity of muddy water from the base or from the weep holes of a slope indicates that the slope is saturated with water. Exposure of the inner soil of the slope and the appearance of new cracks on the slope are early signs of a landslide. Keep away from such slopes. Do not proceed by stepping onto the loose mud if a landslide blocks your way; instead, you should retreat or seek a safer route immediately.

Emergency measures: Unless you are fully equipped and properly trained, do not attempt to rescue anyone buried in a landslide. You should call the organiser and dial 999 for help to avoid causing more casualties.

INTERNATIONAL DISTRESS SIGNALS


Send out six long signals within one minute; pause for one minute and repeat. Do not stop until the rescue team comes (continue with the signals even if the rescue team has spotted you from a long distance, your exact position has to be identified).

Ways of sending signals:

 1) Blowing a whistle

 2) Reflecting light with a mirror or metal sheet

 3) Flashing your torchlight at night

 4) Waving colourful or shiny clothes to attract attention

The organiser advises all participants to read carefully the information about country parks and hiking trails on the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department webpage: http://www.afcd.gov.hk/english/country/cou_vis/cou_vis.html