

Guidelines: Personal Locator Beacon

BACKGROUND

The Club's Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) is available for the use of Leaders. The PLB incorporates a GPS function and strobe light and should be considered essential equipment of Leaders going into a remote area, undertaking an extended bushwalk or traversing terrain of higher risk. The PLB should not be regarded as a substitute for a personal first aid kit, first aid qualifications, maps or navigation skills

Leaders are responsible for the custody of the PLB during the activity, for its operation and safe return. Refer to the operational manual for testing and use.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

The PLB is for emergency use. An emergency is defined as a situation where there is **a real and imminent threat to life**. Activation of a PLB will instigate an immediate (and expensive) search for the injured parties by national rescue services.

In the event of an emergency refer to the operational manual with the PLB.

WHAT ELSE TO DO

Visual Aids

Notwithstanding the use of a PLB, visual aids are essential for rapid location by search aircraft.

- Prepare, if possible, a small smoky fire, but do not light it at this time. Lay out brightly coloured items to help the airborne searchers, the more the better. Red, yellow, orange and silver are highly visible in bush land. Green, blue and silver would be more suitable in open desert country.
- Use reflective objects to alert the aircrew. Knife blades, mirrors and CDs are good reflectors. Light the smoky fire once the aircraft can be heard. From the air, the smoke can be seen for 30 kilometres or more.

Sighting

Once sighted by the aircrew

- Turn off the PLB and collapse the antenna.
- The helicopter crew will be aware of the dangers of downdraught and will maintain a safe height and distance from your fire
- If the helicopter lands **do not approach** until directed by the aircrew.
- When directed, approach in full view of the pilot. **Never go near the tail rotor.**
- If a winch cable is lowered **do not touch it** until advised by the aircrew, because lethal static electricity may need to be discharged.

Before you leave

- Tents, flies and any other non-essential items should be stowed in backpacks well before the arrival of the helicopter.
- Extinguish and cover any fires.
- In the case of evacuation by air, only personnel will be evacuated, so get a GPS position to help you later when you return to recover your gear.