

Tramping Activities

Good Practice Guide

Version 1

2019

Tramping

The tramping activity within the scope of this Good Practice Guide (GPG) includes tracks that are generally well formed and are marked with signs, poles or track markers (usually orange triangles). Major stream and river crossings are bridged. Tracks can be in open or bush terrain and could extend above the bushline in good weather conditions and the absence of snow. Tracks within this scope would be up to and including Intermediate level tracks using the Department of Conservation (DOC) track categories (the DOC walking track categories are listed below).

While travel will be on marked tracks, off track activities such as shelter building and environment activities could be included as part of a trip.

Both day trips and overnight trips are included. Specific guidance for overnight trips is included in the Overnight Camping GPG. Overnight trips could be either camping or staying in huts.

For trips travelling off track and outside the scope of this GPG, it is recommended that instructors or leaders are qualified and experienced to the equivalent of NZOIA Bush 1 or the NZ Certificate in Outdoor Leadership (Bush) Level 5.

This guidance has been developed for tramping activities that are being organised and supervised by someone such as an instructor, youth leader or teacher. However, it may also be helpful for indirectly supervised activities such as Duke of Edinburgh's Award journeys.

This GPG is specific to **Tramping** and is designed to be used in conjunction with the [General Guidance for Organised Outdoor Activities](#) and the [Tramping Planning Template](#).

DOC walking track categories

EASIEST: EASY ACCESS SHORT WALK

Duration: Easy walking for up to an hour.

Suitable for: People of all abilities, wheelchairs, buggies and strollers.

Standard: Even surface, well formed with no steps or steep sections. Stream and rivers are bridged.

Track markers: No track markers as the track is well defined.

Footwear required: Walking shoes.

Typical tracks: Cape Reinga Lighthouse Walk, Milford Foreshore Walk.

EASIEST: SHORT WALK

Duration: Easy walking for up to an hour.

Suitable for: People of most ages and fitness levels.

Standard: Track is well formed, with an even, well drained surface. There may be steps. Stream and rivers crossings are bridged.

Track markers: No track markers as the track is well defined.

Footwear required: Walking shoes.

Typical tracks: Riwaka Resurgence, Waterworks Walk

EASY: WALKING TRACK

Duration: Gentle walking from a few minutes to a day.

Suitable for: People with low to moderate fitness and abilities. Some tracks suitable for mountain biking.

Standard: Track is mostly well formed, some sections may be steep, rough or muddy. Clearly signposted. Stream and river crossings are bridged.

Track markers: Track is clearly marked where necessary with orange triangles attached to trees. Markers of other colours may be present but these indicate biodiversity work areas and are not walking tracks. Above the bushline, marker poles are used instead.

Footwear required: Walking shoes or light tramping/hiking boots.

Typical tracks: Arthur's Pass Walking Track, Orongorongo Track.

INTERMEDIATE: GREAT WALK/EASIER TRAMPING TRACK

Duration: Comfortable multi-day tramping/hiking.

Suitable for: People with limited backcountry (remote area) experience. Some tracks suitable for mountain biking.

Standard: Track is generally well formed, some sections may be rough, muddy or steep. Track has signs, poles or markers. Major stream and river crossings are bridged.

Track markers: Track is clearly marked where necessary with orange triangles attached to trees. Markers of other colours may be present but these indicate biodiversity work areas and are not walking tracks. Above the bushline, marker poles are used instead.

Footwear required: Light tramping/hiking boots.

Typical tracks: Tongariro Northern Circuit, Lake Daniell Track.

ADVANCED: TRAMPING TRACK

Duration: Challenging day or multi-day tramping/hiking.

Suitable for: People with moderate to high level backcountry (remote areas) skills and experience, navigation and survival skills required. Some tracks suitable for mountain biking.

Standard: Track is mostly unformed, may be rough and steep. Track has markers, poles or rock cairns. Expect unbridged stream and river crossings.

Track markers: Track is clearly marked where necessary with orange triangles attached to trees. Markers of other colours may be present but these indicate biodiversity work areas and are not walking tracks. Above the bushline, marker poles or rock cairns are used instead.

Footwear required: Tramping/hiking boots.

Typical tracks: Kapakapanui Track, Inland Track.

EXPERT: ROUTE

Duration: Challenging overnight tramping/hiking.

Suitable for: People with high level backcountry (remote areas) skills and experience, navigation and survival skills required. Complete self-sufficiency required.

Standard: Track unformed and natural, may be rough, muddy or very steep. Track has markers, poles or rock cairns. Expect unbridged stream and river crossings.

Track markers: Track is clearly marked where necessary with orange triangles attached to trees. Markers of other colours may be present but these indicate biodiversity work areas and are not walking tracks. Above the bushline, marker poles or rock cairns are used instead.

Footwear required: Sturdy tramping/hiking boots.

Typical tracks: Three Passes Route, Tararua Northern Crossing.

Potential value of activity

TRAMPING CAN PROVIDE:

- A chance to explore new areas and stay overnight.
- Excitement, fun and a sense of adventure.
- An opportunity to learn and practice new skills.
- Social interaction and being part of a team working on a shared challenge, such as navigation or setting up a shelter.
- Development of resilience.
- Opportunities for taking care and responsibility.
- Environmental experiences (clean air, sounds at night, night sky/stars).
- Freedom from media, cellphones and other digital devices or finding new ways to engage with and use technology.
- Opportunity to connect with the natural environment, Māori cultural perspectives, mythology etc.
- Physical activity, fitness, general health and well-being including mental health.

“Everywhere is within walking distance if you have the time”
Steven Wright

Planning considerations

See the [General Guidance for Organised Outdoor Activities](#)

Trip Planning

*Guidance on:
The trip planning process.*

The **Outdoor Safety Code** has five simple steps that are key in the trip planning process:

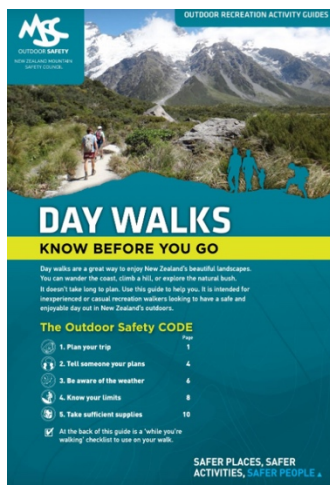
- Plan your trip.
- Tell someone your plans.
- Be aware of the weather.
- Know your limits.
- Take sufficient supplies.

For more information on how to use the **Outdoor Safety Code** to plan your trip refer to:

<https://www.mountainsafety.org.nz/resources/outdoor-safety-code/>

The Mountain Safety Council have produced a series of *Outdoor Recreation Activity Guides*, one for *Day Walks* and one for *Multiday Tramping*, to help plan a trip. Available on the MSC website:

<https://www.mountainsafety.org.nz/resources/toolbox/free-activity-guides/>



The Mountain Safety Council also have an online trip planning tool, Plan My Trip:

<https://www.mountainsafety.org.nz/plan-my-trip/#/>

Participants

Guidance on:

How to ensure the activities match the participants' abilities and needs.

- Selecting a trip that is suitable for the participants is a critical first step in the planning process. When selecting a trip consider the length, duration, difficulty, potential hazards (streams/ rivers, steep terrain), time of year, likely weather conditions and then match this to the age, experience and ability of the participants.
- Loop (circuit) or point to point trips give more sense of a journey and can be more engaging than trips that use the same track to and from a destination. Also including activities other than walking can be a great way to engage participants, e.g., activities such as shelter building, fire lighting, navigation or environmental activities.
- Lots of information is available to help choose a suitable trip, including guidebooks, websites and the Department of Conservation. However, the best source of information is often someone who has done the trip previously, with a similar group.
- If possible, plan trips that have options for making the trip shorter in case of the group travelling slower than expected, the weather conditions changing or a group member suffering an injury. Also consider back-up options for overnight stays.
- Giving participants information about the planned trip beforehand, or engaging them in the planning process, helps them assess their own ability level, knowledge and experience in relation to the planned activity.
- If the aim is to do an overnight trip or longer day trip, consider doing a series of shorter trips as a lead up. Similarly consider an overnight trip as a lead up to a multi night trip.

- Dividing into smaller ability level groups or buddying up less confident or able participants with more confident or able ones.
- Will the participants be responsible for navigation and /or group management or will the group leaders/ instructors do this?

Supervision

Guidance on:

The level and style of supervision typically required for this activity.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING WHEN DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATE SUPERVISION STRUCTURE FOR TRAMPING:

Refer to the [Overnight Camping GPG](#) for specific considerations for a trip with an overnight component, such as sleeping arrangements, cooking etc.

- There is no one ratio of skilled and experienced leaders to participants, but some considerations would be:
 - Age and ability of the participants, including fitness, medical conditions etc.
 - The length, duration and difficulty of the planned trip.
 - Environmental conditions such as potential hazards (streams/ rivers, steep terrain), the time of year and likely weather conditions.
 - Skill and experience of the leaders.
- When there is more than one supervisor, clearly defined roles and responsibilities should be delegated. This is particularly important when using accompanying teachers (who are not the activity leader), student leaders or parent helpers.
- Supervision requirements will change for different activities that might be included in a tramping trip, e.g., fire lighting or shelter building. Activities with a teaching component can also change supervision requirements.
- Any activities that involve participants in and around water will require a different level of supervision than when walking/ tramping on a track. Swimming and water activities at breaks and lunchtime have the potential to become unsupervised when leaders *drop their guard*. For help with planning for supervision of activities in and around water, refer to the [Inland Waterway Swimming Activities GPG](#).

“A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way” John C. Maxwell

Leader competence

The experience and knowledge required by those running the activity, both for normal operation and for managing emergencies.

Skills and knowledge

The simplest way to evaluate competence is to look at the qualifications they hold. Asking questions of potential leaders and having them provide examples of training or experience as part of their answer allows you to assess their experience and knowledge. It is also appropriate to ask for references to confirm the information they provide.

SPECIFIC LEADER COMPETENCIES RELEVANT TO THE ACTIVITIES AND ENVIRONMENTS COVERED IN THIS GPG INCLUDE:

- Personal skills and knowledge, e.g., navigation skills, camping skills for overnight trips.
- Previous experience in similar environment/ terrain or type of trip.
- Ideally qualified or has had some formal training.
- Group management skills and experience.
- Leadership skills, e.g., good judgement and decision making in changing situations and conditions (weather), effective group management etc.
- Trips with an overnight stay have additional supervisory challenges that are not present during the walking/ tramping component and have more requirements for the leader(s).
- Knowledge and awareness of appropriate environmental and cultural practices for the location or area.



IF USING ASSISTANT LEADERS, SOME MINIMUM COMPETENCIES TO CONSIDER FOR THESE WOULD BE:

- Previous tramping experience in a similar environment or type of trip.
- Navigation skills.
- Group management skills.
- Knowledge of emergency procedures.

Relevant Qualifications

While formal qualifications are not necessary, the following qualifications are relevant for tramping activity within the scope of this GPG:

- New Zealand Certificate in Outdoor Leadership (Bush) Level 4 and 5.
- NZOIA Bush Leader and NZOIA Bush 1.
- A current first aid certificate.

Resources and equipment

Consider what equipment and resources are required to ensure the trip runs safely. The participants may be required to bring this, or it may be provided to them.

Participant

What each participant would need to bring to the activity.

- Footwear requirements will vary with the type of track and duration of the trip. Good footwear that offers ankle support and grip in wet or muddy conditions is best. Lightweight tramping boots are ideal, but many participants may not have a pair. Footwear should fit properly and be comfortable, so it's better for participants to use something they already have, than borrow something that doesn't fit them. It is also important that footwear has good tread on the bottom, as sections of the track may be slippery or rocky.
- A wind and waterproof outer layer, i.e., a raincoat!
- Insulation and base layers of thermal fabrics such as fleece, wool or polypropylene. Include a hat and gloves.
- A pack suitable for the type of trip. A small day pack is ideal for a day walk but a larger pack will be required for overnight trips. Include a waterproof pack liner; for a day pack a heavy-duty plastic bag will work fine.
- High energy food such as muesli bars, nuts and dried fruit, and a bottle of water (1L minimum is recommended).
- Participants on overnight trips will also need:
 - Personal sleeping gear (sleeping bags, camping mat). Consider the season and how to ensure participants are warm enough during the night.
 - Toiletries, including overnight medications (and spares of critical medications).
 - Warm dry clothes for sleeping (if daytime clothing gets wet).
 - Personal lighting (headlamps and torches).

Group

Equipment that will be provided for the participants.

- Maps, compasses and any other navigational aids being used if participants are going to be doing any navigation. Even just a supply of maps can be a useful way for participants to follow where they are and be involved in navigation, location awareness and estimating times and distances.
- Toileting/ hygiene supplies (hand cleaning, toilet paper). If a latrine or toileting holes need to be dug, bring an appropriate shovel or trowel.
- Spare clothing. Often a supply of clothing that can be issued to participants before the trip can be useful for participants who don't have suitable clothing, e.g., a raincoat or thermals.

- Groups on overnight trips will also need:
 - Tents/ shelters if camping, as opposed to staying in huts.
 - Cooking equipment and food. Ensure cookers have the correct type of fuel in sufficient quantities. Also check that fuel and gas lines do not leak during use. Consider bringing spare seals and/or stove repair equipment.
 - Group lighting (lanterns, candles). Make sure all leaders and participants have access to effective night lighting (torches, headlamps etc. with adequate spare batteries) for getting around safely after dark. It is useful to make sure these are readily available if a group is likely to be arriving late/setting up in the dark.

Leader

Equipment that should be carried by the leader or that the leader should have easy access to.

- List of participants, including any health or other needs that the leader should know about.
- Safety plan including emergency contact numbers (see [Tramping Planning Template](#)).
- Map and compass.
- An emergency shelter such as a fly, tarp or bothy bag that the whole group can shelter under. This is important for longer day walks as well as overnight trips. For overnight trips planning on using back country huts, make sure that you have enough emergency shelters for the whole group to sleep under (a fly for example). This may be needed if the hut cannot be reached (e.g., due to getting lost or flooded rivers) or if the hut is full when you arrive.
- Emergency comms; a cell phone and a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) are the most commonly used combination.
- First Aid Kit. Contents will depend on such things as; the size and type of group, duration and location of the trip. Participants with known anaphylaxis should bring their own adrenaline and avoid known triggers, e.g., wasp areas.
- Spare clothing for participants.

For more detailed information on gear and equipment, refer to the Mountain Safety Council *Outdoor Recreation Activity Guides* for *Day Walks* and for *Multiday Tramping*:

<https://www.mountainsafety.org.nz/resources/toolbox/free-activity-guides/>

or watch the [Get Outdoors video series](#) on YouTube



Leave No Trace (LNT)/Environmental Protection

Consider how you can plan your activity to minimise long term damage to the environment. Overnight camping has a higher impact on the environment than other outdoor activities because participants are present at a site for longer with more concentrated traffic and waste.

There are seven key LNT principles which are:

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Ground
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimise the Effects of Fire
6. Respect Wildlife and Farm Animals
7. Be Considerate of Others

For further information about Leave No Trace see:

Leave No Trace Lesson Plans, Activities and Videos on the Leave No Trace NZ website:

<https://leavenotrace.org.nz/>

MSC video on Leave No Trace:

<https://www.mountainsafety.org.nz/resources/toolbox/environment/>

Further support

Places to gain more information from, e.g., specialist websites, industry bodies or clubs.

Mountain Safety Council – Bushcraft Manual – Outdoor Skills for the NZ Bush

<https://mountainsafety.org.nz/activities/tramping-walking>

Mountain Safety Council – Plan My Trip

<https://www.mountainsafety.org.nz/plan-my-trip/#/>

MSC Outdoor Recreation Activity Guides – Day Walks and Multiday Tramping

<https://www.mountainsafety.org.nz/resources/toolbox/free-activity-guides/>

Leave No Trace New Zealand

<https://leavenotrace.org.nz/>

Department of Conservation – Know before you go

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/know-before-you-go/>

Good Practice Guidelines

<http://www.supportadventure.co.nz/activity-specific-good-practice-information/good-practice-guidelines>