

Australian Canoeing Award Scheme 2014

Minimal Impact Guidelines



Introduction

As part of the AC commitment to the environment and to ensure consistency and compliance with land users, AC requires their accredited companies and Registered Guides and Instructors to comply with the following minimal impact standards.

Minimal Impact Practices Guideline

Canoeists, like others who use the outdoors for recreation, have a responsibility to minimise their impact on the natural environment, the enjoyment of others and on public and private property.

Australian Canoeing Guides and Instructors agree to comply with these guidelines and any additional National Park, council or other authorities' regulations and fire bans.

Access

- Always seek permission from landowners (including government authorities) for access to water. Apart from being courteous, it is often required by law. Also, you may need their help later.
- If you land at the edge of private property, be courteous and make yourself and your intentions known to the person.
- Use gates, not fences, and leave gates as you find them.
- Only drive vehicles on designated roads.
- Leave livestock and property alone.
- Use current paths and do not damage or remove flora.

Rubbish

- If you carry it in, carry it out. Carry bags for storing your rubbish.
- Take foods that have minimal packaging. Fresh food does not need cans and jars.
- Don't be too proud to clean up someone else's rubbish.
- Conserve water sources by not polluting them with soap, detergents or food scraps.

Fires

AC recommends the use of fuel stoves for cooking. They are environmentally friendly and more efficient than fires. Some national parks do not allow open fires. Check the local regulations.

If you do require an open fire:

- Do not collect wood for fires – it is illegal in some national parks.
- Check with RFS or council for fire bans before lighting any fire or stove.
- Use fireplaces or old fire scars if available – do not create new areas.
- When on beaches, build the fire below the high tide line.
- Keep fires small. Large fires are wasteful.
- Carefully select a site away from bushes, trees and rocks that could be damaged.
- Do not surround the fire with stones (leave the stones where they are).
- Do not dig a pit.
- Stop the fire long before you intend to leave, putting out fires should not be a last minute practice.
- To ensure the fire is completely extinguished quench the fire with water before leaving.

Australian Canoeing Award Scheme 2014

Minimal Impact Guidelines



Toilets

- Make provision to carry out human wastes where conditions are likely to result in wastes being a significant part of the impact of the group.
- Select toilet sites 100 metres or more from water courses.
- Dig a hole 15–20 centimetres deep.
- Toilet paper should be carried out (do not burn).
- Sanitary pads and tampons should be carried out.

Flora and Fauna

- Use tracks where possible to minimize damage to flora.
- Just being there is a disturbance to wildlife. Make as little noise as possible and respect the homes of animals.
- Animals and plants are not to be disturbed.
- Do not feed animals.
- Do not bring animals into National Parks.
- Conform to fishing requirements including licensing and size/volume restrictions.

Equipment

- If boats require tying up, ensure that the system does not damage the rocks or vegetation that is used.
- To avoid the transportation of weeds or soil borne pathogens, ensure that all gear is cleaned prior to any trip and then at the area prior to leaving after a trip.
- Use self-supporting tents, rather than tarps or systems that rely on guys etc. from flora.

Rivers

- Avoid putting anything into the water that may pollute it. This includes soap, dishwater, food scraps and rubbish.

Beaches

- Dunes and their vegetation are an essential but fragile part of the beach ecosystem.
- Minimise damage to dunes by doing the following:
 - Carry boats over dunes – do not drag them.
 - When entry and egress is from the water, leave boats below the dune level.
 - Do not dig into dunes or create high-use tracks – where a formed track is present, always use it.
- Beaches and dunes are the nesting sites of many birds. Tread carefully and do not disturb nests.

Bushwalking

- Use formed tracks where possible.
- In untracked areas, do not cut or trample vegetation. With larger groups use multiple routes so as not to create a badly worn area.
- When planning your trip (including emergency access) plan to use formed tracks.

Australian Canoeing Award Scheme 2014

Minimal Impact Guidelines



Campsites

- Campsites should be at least 20 metres from creeks, rivers or the sea shore. Some National parks have a minimum requirement of 200 metres.
- Do not take radios or play loud music in campsites. Respect the rights of others and minimise your impact on the local fauna.
- Leave timber etc., where it is. Do not create campsite furniture.
- Do not clear campsite areas. If staying for more than one night, move your tent to minimise damage.

Finally

Always leave a trip intention plan or float plan with a responsible party that complies with National Park's trip registration and licensing requirements.

Leave no trace!