

Emergency Guide Peninsula Tramping Club 1.11.2017

If you have **cell-phone coverage** call **111** and ask for **POLICE**

Activation of the PLB

“If in doubt, get them out”

Some examples of when you should push the button:

- Immobilised patients in significant pain with traumatic injuries.
- Fractured limbs where getting out under own steam will create more pain and distress or if the fracture results in less blood circulation eg in fingers or toes.
- Risk of infection eg injury to eye – especially if self-rescue will take a long time.
- Relatively minor injuries – but distant from road, increased risk to rest of group, difficulty of terrain or bad weather conditions.
- Traumatic brain injuries – knocked out or concussed- look for changes to consciousness such as anxiety or repetitive questioning.
- Hypothermic or hyperthermic.
- Medical emergencies such as anaphylaxis, suspected heart attack, severe asthma, prolonged diarrhoea and/or vomiting.
- People in sustained pain.

Assisting rescue

- No more accidents – make yourself, your group and the patient safe.
- **Leadership** – take control. Analyse the situation and implement a plan.
- Good, clear communication.
- Attend to everybody’s **physical** (food, fluid, warmth and rest) and **emotional** well-being.
- **Write** everything down as memory can become unreliable in stressful times.
- **Location** - map series, grid references/GPS coordinates and physical description.
- **Weather and terrain conditions.**
- **Accident details** – what happened?
- **Details of patient** including injuries, illness treatments and observations. Their personal details including next-of-kin contacts, medical conditions, allergies, medications . Look for a PTC pink sheet in the patient’s first aid kit if the patient can’t tell you.
Give these written observations to your rescuers

Preparing for a helicopter rescue

- **In daylight** make yourself visible with smoke, flares, reflectors, waving orange pack liners, or by shaking trees. Waving arms and stationary pack liners are hard to see from the air.
- **At night light** from candles, torch, cell-phone screen, camera flash, cigarette lighter can be seen a long way off if the helicopter has night vision capability. To avoid blinding the pilot shine torches downwards as the helicopter approaches.
- Send all the patient’s **personal gear** and **incident notes** with the patient.
- **Additional passengers** may be able to go on the helicopter so be prepared.
- A landing site needs to be tennis court size (30 metres across, 50 metres at night), relatively flat, free of obstacles on the approach, free of loose objects.
- **Indicate the wind direction** by one person standing on the upwind edge of the landing site, back to the wind and arms outstretched to the front.
- This is also the best place for the group to wait for the helicopter.
- Ensure there are no fires, tents, or loose objects within 100 metres of the landing site.
- Be aware that the pilot may choose another site or decide on a winch rescue. Even without a landing site numerous winch rescues occur every year in difficult terrain or dense heavy bush.

- For a **winch rescue** a clear gap in the canopy overhead is needed with the local canopy height less than 20 metres (safe winch height). There should be no tall trees within 30 metres.
- In forest the PLB may be difficult to pinpoint. You may choose to move it and all, or part of the group, to a more open area if available.
- Typically a rescue helicopter will approach within one to three hours of PLB activation depending on location and weather conditions.

Safety around helicopters

- Remain calm and take your time.
- Think before you act.
- Secure loose articles of clothing including hats before approaching and don't chase anything that rotor downwash may blow away.
- Always obtain thumbs up, a wave or positive head nod from pilot/crew before approaching the helicopter.
- Approach from the front -10 o'clock to 2 o'clock.
- Never go near the **tail rotor** of the helicopter.
- **Stoop** , as the rotors can dip due to wind gusts.
- If the helicopter has landed on a slope wait for an approach signal from the pilot or crew and approach from **below** the level of the helicopter.
- If rotor wash or dust impairs your vision crouch down and stay put until can see again. Wear goggles in snow as rotor wash will blow up ice and snow.
- **Light items** must be strapped to heavy items.
- Crampons and ice-axes should be inside packs, or carried separately.
- Carry items no higher than **waist high**.
- Do not touch a strop from a hovering helicopter until it has first touched the ground to discharge **static electricity**.
- If a winch line is lowered stay still with arm out. The helicopter will be positioned to bring the line to you.
- Do not open or close helicopter doors unless the pilot directs you. **Close doors gently**.
- When **exiting** a helicopter in steep country take care not to walk uphill into the main rotor.

NOTES