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## HIKERS GUIDE

Rev 20230705

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### 2. Introduction

The Berg-en-Dal Hiking Club was established in 1986 by a small group of hikers from George, and is run according to Christian values.

George is located in the heart of the Garden Route area of the Western Cape province of South Africa. Since its humble beginnings, it has now grown to ±130 members of which approximately 60% regularly attend hikes.

The club organises hiking events in the area throughout the year. Day hikes are on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Multi-day hikes range from 2 to 10 days.

Tuesday hikes are limited to 3 hours (approx. 10 km) except for the first Tuesday of the month, when a longer hike is arranged and hikers can bring food and drinks to enjoy a picnic in nature.

Saturday hikes range between 12 and 20 km, with an average duration of between 4 and 7 hours.

### 3. Disclaimer

The club, committee, leaders and hikers do not accept any liability for personal injuries, damage or loss of personal property or the death of hikers and/or their minors during outings. A new member or guest is obliged to hand over to the hike leader a completed and signed indemnity form before commencing on his/her first excursion.

#### 4. Guests

Should you wish to join us for a hike, as a Guest, go to DOCUMENTS, on our website, to access our Constitution, Hiking guide, and Indemnity Form.

Contact the Chairperson or Hike leader to enquire/confirm hike details and request a spot for the hike.

Complete and sign the Indemnity form, and hand to the leader before commencement of the hike.

The club activities are usually free. However, you will be expected to contribute towards fuel costs, permit, -and entry fees.

#### 5. Membership

Applications for membership will be completed in accordance with clause 5 of the club's constitution. To apply for membership a person is expected to participate, as a Guest, in at least 3 hikes with the club. Thereafter they may approach a committee member to apply for membership of the club.

#### 6. Hike Program

All the information regarding hikes is indicated on the official Year Program and reflect the trail head, date and starting time of the hike, the level of difficulty, the destination as well as the name and contact details of the hike leader.

##### 6.1. Usual assembly point on a Saturday Morning

Address -: **11 Kerk St, Bodorp, George, 6529**

GPS Coordinates -: **-33.955647, 22.463761**

##### 6.2. Usual assembly point on a Tuesday Morning (Hiking Garden Route Dam Area)

Address -: **97 Stander Street, Loeriepark, George, 6529**

GPS Coordinates -: **-33.962518, 22.496318**

##### 6.3. Usual assembly point on a Tuesday Morning (Hiking Witfontein Area)

Address -: **Witfontein Forestry Station, George, 6529**

GPS Coordinates -: **-33.935591, 22.427031**

or

Address -: **Botaniese Tuin, 49 Caledon street, Bodorp, George, 6529**

GPS Coordinates -: -33.947967, 22.463695

## 7. Hike Participation

- 7.1. Hikes are organised by and with the approval of management. Each member is informed by way of a program or other notices of such hikes and each member has an equal opportunity to participate except if the size of the group is limited by circumstances or by management
- 7.2. In case the number of people on a hike needs to be limited, the following arrangement applies:
  - 7.2.1. Members enjoy preference over guests;
  - 7.2.2. Management, in consultation with the hike leader, may decide who may participate in the hike, provided that a member cannot be refused twice and married and family members shall be grouped together.
- 7.3. It is a privilege to visit the wonderful and unique natural areas in our Country and enjoy nature in all its splendour, variety and greatness. However, each participant has a duty towards the environment and co-hikers to make hikes as enjoyable and safe as possible. Rescue operations are very expensive and difficult, not always successful and should therefore be avoided if possible

## 8. Code of Conduct during the Hike

The club expects participating hikers to respect and abide by the following code of conduct:

- 8.1. Follow and honor the instructions of the hike leader. No member of the hiking party may undermine the leadership of the hike leader or try to change decisions by a vote and no one may leave the hiking group without permission from the hike leader
- 8.2. Every hiker must at all times carry his/her membership card, and guests should have a copy of their signed Indemnity form with them
- 8.3. Do not violate codes of conduct of third parties and/or landowners, e.g., Forestry, Nature Conservation, etc.
- 8.4. Stay in the group and do not leave without informing the hike leader or a fellow hiker.
- 8.5. Do not delay the group unnecessarily
- 8.6. When you need to leave the trail, leave your backpack next to the footpath where it is visible
- 8.7. If a hiker needs a toilet without one nearby, the acceptable practice is to dig a hole
- 8.8. Respect the environment and property that is being hiked on
- 8.9. Tread lightly, do not disturb the environment, avoid being loud, refrain from making music, singing and prevent unnecessary loud noises from cellphones
- 8.10. Follow only the existing footpaths
- 8.11. Tread over weirs and erosion poles and do not step on them

- 8.12. Do not leave any litter, including leftover food and peels, behind
- 8.13. Do not damage or remove any flora and try not to disturb or scare any fauna
- 8.14. Do not damage or make deliberate scratch marks on rocks and trees
- 8.15. Refrain from contaminating water streams and dams
- 8.16. Use existing fireplaces, control and manage the size and intensity of fires at all times and always extinguish completely after use
- 8.17. No pets are allowed during excursions
- 8.18. Hikers must have a realistic opinion of their fitness and should not create unnecessary risks for the group
- 8.19. Familiarise oneself with the trail- and weather conditions
- 8.20. Assist fellow hikers who need help

## **9. Multi-day Hikes**

- 9.1. Contact the designated hike leader as soon as possible after the new hiking program is available and express your interest
- 9.2. After receiving the tentative planning document from the hike leader, members who expressed their interest must confirm their commitment to participate by following further instructions from the hike leader, complete the required documentation, pay for accommodation and other expenses and attend any planning meetings organised by the leader
- 9.3. If the leader has scheduled a planning or information meeting, it is the responsibility of each participant to attend such meetings, or to enquire about the info and arrangements that have been discussed
- 9.4. In cases where a specific hike has been fully booked, the names of the non-successful applicants will be placed on a waiting list and if a vacancy on the hike becomes available, the hike leader will notify the applicants at the top of the waiting list.
- 9.5. If a member has confirmed his/her participation and has paid fees and, for whatever reason can no longer participate in the hike, then he or she will have to find a substitute if a suitable and willing candidate is not available on the waiting list
- 9.6. If a substitute cannot be found, the member shall forfeit all paid money and will be held responsible for any outstanding money

## **10. Recommended Essential Hiking Items**

- 10.1. Day hikes
  - 10.1.1. Suitable hiking shoes and socks;
  - 10.1.2. Hat and sun glasses;
  - 10.1.3. Sunscreen and lip ice;
  - 10.1.4. Insect repellent for mosquitoes and ticks;
  - 10.1.5. Rain jacket and appropriate clothing during inclement weather conditions;

- 10.1.6. Appropriate light clothing during warmer weather;
- 10.1.7. Hiking stick for support on uneven and / or slippery terrain;
- 10.1.8. Enough fresh drinking water;
- 10.1.9. Refreshments;
- 10.1.10. Personal medicine and own first aid kit;
- 10.1.11. Whistle;

## 10.2. Multiday hikes

- 10.2.1. Same items listed in 3.1 are also applicable;
- 10.2.2. Headlight and ample batteries;
- 10.2.3. First aid equipment;
- 10.2.4. Plasters;
- 10.2.5. Crepe dressing - 50 or 75 mm;
- 10.2.6. Triangular bandage;
- 10.2.7. Anti-septic ointment;
- 10.2.8. Tablets for muscle cramps, pains and nausea;
- 10.2.9. Rehydration powder;
- 10.2.10. Knife or scissors, industrial adhesive tape or rope;
- 10.2.11. Thermal Blanket.

## 11. Personal Safety

- 11.1. Avoid criminal Hotspots.
- 11.2. Enquire about safety when hiking in an unknown area
- 11.3. Do not wear expensive jewelry as it attracts criminals
- 11.4. Criminals are mostly anxious, usually armed, and unpredictable, and focus on soft targets.
- 11.5. Do not Hike alone.
- 11.6. The group must stay close to each other
- 11.7. Crime is usually planned in advance
- 11.8. It seldom happens that victims get the upper hand
- 11.9. Do not act irresponsibly, stay calm
- 11.10. People can be seriously injured or even get killed, if they resist
- 11.11. The "Stuff" can be replaced

## 12. Snake Bites

The following section is to give you some basic information on snake bite prevention and treatment. Venomous snakes occur in almost all areas of South Africa, and despite that, deaths due to snake bite are relatively rare. Careful members should not get bitten, and no fear should keep you from enjoying the outdoors.

### 12.1. Precautions

- 12.1.1. Familiarise yourself with the type of dangerous snakes found in your hiking area. Young/Baby snakes are just as venomous as adults.
- 12.1.2. Buying anti-venom and ancillary drugs and equipment is seldom justified, especially since the serum itself can cause death or significant illness. The serum has a very short shelf life if carried around in a hot back pack

- 12.1.3. Always put your hands and feet only where you can see them
- 12.1.4. Use a light at night
- 12.1.5. Do not play with/annoy/catch snakes. Snakes sometimes “play” dead
- 12.1.6. Wear protective clothing and boots where appropriate.

## 12.2. If Bitten

- 12.2.1. It is impossible to give optimal treatment to any patient in the wild. The patient must get to a hospital as quickly as possible
- 12.2.2. Identify the snake, or try to remember as much as possible of its features, or take a picture. Treatment in hospital will be much easier if the snake has been identified
- 12.2.3. Keep the patient calm by assuring them of the assistance he/she will get.
- 12.2.4. Phone for assistance
  - 12.2.4.1. First, contact the member’s emergency contact person, found on his/her member card. Send a WhatsApp with location if possible.
  - 12.2.4.2. Second, contact one of the emergency services in the area.
- 12.2.5. Make the patient as comfortable as possible;
- 12.2.6. Immobilise affected limbs
- 12.2.7. Elevate affected limb, if possible
- 12.2.8. Stop severe bleeding
- 12.2.9. Remove all constricting clothes, ornaments, and rings as soon as possible, before any swelling starts
- 12.2.10. The pain may be severe and may be helped by Panado. Avoid Aspirin
- 12.2.11. Keep the eyes closed to prevent drying out
- 12.2.12. Mop the saliva out of the patient’s mouth if necessary.
- 12.2.13. If it is reasonable the patient may be able to walk by himself, but a call to a rescue team may be appropriate. Common sense and consultation with the rescue team should enable a good decision. Everyone who may have been bitten should be taken to hospital for observation. Further treatment may involve antibiotics and anti-tetanus injection

12.3. Venoms that affect nerves can paralyse and kill a person relatively quickly. These effects can be controlled by using rescue breathing for as long as it takes to get the patient to hospital.

## 12.4. What not to do

- 12.4.1. Do not cut the wound
- 12.4.2. Suck the venom out either by mouth or by mechanical device
- 12.4.3. Put nasty chemicals into the wound
- 12.4.4. Shock the area with electricity of any sort
- 12.4.5. Apply a tourniquet under any circumstances.

## 13. Medicine and Medical Emergencies

- 13.1. Always take your required prescription -or anti-allergy medication with you

- 13.2. In the case of a medical emergency, the primary recourse is to phone for assistance, by either contacting the Emergency Contact Person on the patient's membership card or an Emergency Service
- 13.3. If possible, do basic First Aid.

#### **14. Whistle Codes (International)**

- 14.1. Three blasts - Distress call - which is loosely translated as "Help me"
- 14.2. Two blasts - Call back signal - which means "Come here"
- 14.3. One blast - Where are you?, or it can be a call back signal if you hear anything that sounds like a signal.
- 14.4. Each whistle blast should last 3 seconds.

#### **15. Trail Grading**

See our separate document on how the trails are graded to get a better understanding of trail conditions.

#### **16. Emergency Contact Numbers**

See our separate document for National and Local Emergency numbers

#### **17. Additional Information**

Lots of information is available on the internet to expand your knowledge on all of the above topics. Make time to read up on them.

- 17.1. <http://www.capenature.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/There-and-back-Safely-Hiking-Protocol.pdf>
- 17.2. <http://www.cmej.org.za/index.php/cmej/article/view/2546/2581>
- 17.3. [http://www.berg.co.za/poisonous\\_snakes.htm](http://www.berg.co.za/poisonous_snakes.htm)
- 17.4. <http://www.tyroneping.co.za/snakes/>