

Buller Huts Trail

And Skills Training

18th – 26th November 2023

The Buller Huts Trail is a 96km, 5500M ascent/descent, 7day, loop walk from Mt Buller Resort and incorporates a small section of the Australian Alps Walking Trail. <http://www.bullerhutstrail.com.au/portfolio-items/itinerary/> . The Buller Huts Trail is a serious grade 5 undertaking for well-prepared, self-reliant adventurers, with a good level of fitness and who understand the risks of walking in a remote alpine area. Weather can change rapidly, even in summer and the Howqua River level may be high, research river crossing technique <https://bushwalkingmanual.org.au/the-trip/challenging-conditions/crossing-rivers/> The group will have experience and ability to navigate, be self reliant ie. Have good gear and be prepared to carry the essentials, see below “Extract from Trail Hiking Australia”, maintaining hut etiquette <https://bushwalkingvictoria.org.au/hut-etiquette>, organizing transport, lodging trip intention form, coordinating accommodation before and after trip and doing your research etc. You will observe the Bushwalkers Code of Conduct <https://www.bushwalkingnsw.org.au/bushwalkers-code/> for example, clean your boots and any other debris from your gear beforehand so you don't introduce new weed species or Phytophthora to the area.

This is a skills training exercise and I hope you will learn at least one new thing from joining this trip, please read all the links provided. If you would like to do this walk and are unsure if you meet the criteria please contact Lorraine. It is not that hard if you are well prepared. We will run pack training days on Sundays starting two months prior to the trip.

For Emergency

1. We will carry:
 - 2x small PLB..
 - GPS spare Batteries
 - All mobile phones will be required in an emergency. Conserve your own battery power, battery packs can be unreliable, solar charges need sunlight which is not always available in the high country.
2. Lodge Trip Intentions Form with responsible Contact or committee member <https://www.mansfieldmtbuller.com.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/46/Victoria-Police-Trip-Intentions-and-Information-Form.pdf>
3. Advise **Make and Rego number** of cars being left at Mt Buller Summit carpark to the Mt Buller management Board.

Meeting Place

Mt Buller Summit Carpark ready to leave by 9.30 am. [See map](#)

Transport

Own cars, car pool.

Accommodation

Night before and after walk we can stay in Mansfield:

- High Country Holiday Park, 1 Ultimo Street, Mansfield-Tel: (03) 5775 2705

- Mansfield Travellers Lodge Motel and Backpackers, 116 High Street, Mansfield-[03 5775 1800](tel:0357751800)
- The Delatite Hotel, 95 High Street, Mansfield-PH:[03 5775 2004](tel:0357752004)

We will probably meet up for a pre-walk briefing in Mansfield.

Meals

Pack meals: 6 Breakfast, 7 lunches, 6 Dinners Plus spare

Water

Water can be collected along the track each day and should be treated.

There may be problems with sufficient water at Bluff Hut Tank, Craig Hut Tank and Hells Window. I will check with the ranger closer to the time and if necessary have alternate routes planned also be fitness prepared to walk on to the next camp. At worst case we may have to carry water to Craig hut but our packs will be lighter by then. [See John Hilliers notes below on finding water](#)

Park Passes

None

Fires

This is a fuel stove only area but some huts have combustion fires.

Cost

Accommodation and shared fuel costs

Maps

SV maps- Buller-Howitt Alpine Area. All participants to purchase this map and help each other with navigation

Itinerary and Track Notes

[See next page.](#)

My walks allow time to relax and enjoy the moment so bring something to entertain yourself in some down time such as book, Kindle, Ipad, Podcast, cards.

Read the track notes on the website and be familiar with all aspects of the trail including difficulties with water.

Grade 5 Hike

Very experienced bush walkers with specialised skills, including navigation and emergency first aid. Tracks are likely to be very rough, very steep and unmarked. Walks may be more than 20km.

Extra Equipment

River crossing shoes if you don't want wet boots from day 1. Blisters are more likely when your feet are constantly wet.

Everyone must carry a whistle, compass, the **Buller-Howitt Alpine Area map**. (My maps provided on the website with trail marked optional)

Tent repair kit and First aid kit with emergency blanket.

Other items on the 10 Essentials list.

Buller Huts Trail: Track Notes

The <https://www.bullerhutstrail.com.au/> is a 96km, 5500M ascent/descent, grade 5 circuit hike located in the Alpine National Park, Victoria. The hike should take approximately 7 days to complete and is a hike for serious and well prepared hikers only. Do not underestimate this hike, as many have done, it is a tough, challenging but rewarding experience.

Day 1: Mount Buller to Eight Mile Flat (17.3km)

The Buller Huts Trail commences on Mount Buller, high in the Victorian Alps, at an altitude of just over 1660m and traverses some of Victoria's most spectacular mountain summits. These include Mount Buller, The Bluff, Mount Eadley Stoney, Mount Lovick, Mount Magdala, Mount Howitt, Mount Buggery, Mount Speculation, Mount Koonika, The Monument and Mount Stirling.

Commencing on Athletes Walk, near the junction of Mount Buller and Summit Roads. Follow the walks until you reach the junction of Summit Road. Turn left and walk along Summit Road to the carpark. The Summit Nature Trail starts here. Follow the trail initially north west as it twists and turns to the summit of Mount Buller (1805m). *Some walkers may prefer to commence the hike at the summit car park. Your preferred start point in the Mount Buller Alpine Resort is completely up to you really, where you start, you will end.* We will commence the walk from the summit carpark with the option of summiting Mt Buller before we start the trail about 30minutes return.

From the summit, retrace your steps to the first junction. Turn right towards Koflers Hutte to the junction of the Family ski run to the start of Four Mile Spur. The trail now descends steeply along this often narrow spur for approximately 6.5km to the Howqua River below. This portion of the track is unmaintained and often overgrown requiring some "bushbashing" and navigation skills.

Turning east, cross the Howqua River, this may be flowing fast at this time of year, I will check with the ranger beforehand. Follow the Howqua River a further 6.5km as it winds its way through the valley to Eight Mile Flat. An excellent camp site on the banks of the Howqua River.

Day 2: Eight Mile Flat to Bluff Hut (12.5km)

From a pleasant grassy clearing beside the Howqua River, The trail now climbs steadily through dry open forest along Eight Mile Spur. The final stages of the ascent to the rugged natural ramparts of the Bluff are quite steep, but the rewards are soon evident (climb of 1177M plus undulations). From the treeless 1,725 metre summit a spectacular alpine panorama unfolds, stretching to Mount Buller in the north and faraway Lake Eildon.

The trail continues through alpine meadows, carpeted with brilliant wildflowers in early summer, to **Bluff Hut** and a sheltered campsite among the nearby snow gums.

Day 3: Bluff Hut to Hells Window (13.5km)

Follow Bluff Track east from Bluff hut over the summit of Mount Lovick (1684m) for approximately 5.6km to the junction of Cairn Creek Track. Turn north at this point and descend to **Lovicks Hut**.

Approximately 1.2km north of the hut the junction of Helicopter Spur will be reached. This is one of the steepest spurs in this region and quite a rewarding hike in its own right. Turn east at this point and continue along Bluff Track, past Picture Point (with spectacular views) then on to the junction of the Australian Alpine Walking Trail. Follow the trail in a north easterly direction towards Mount Magdala traversing one of the best sections of the long-distance Australian Alps Walking Track.

Descend past Hells Window to the saddle between Magdala and Big Hill where you will find an open grassy campsite amongst the snow gums.

Day 4: Hells Window to Speculation Road (13.6km)

From the campsite continue along the trail, which heads north east, towards Mount Howitt. Take the time here to soak up the views across the Cross Cut Saw to the north before descending Mount Howitt to the junction of the Cross Cut Saw and Mount Howitt Walking Track. From this point head directly east to Macalister Springs and the **Vallejo Gantner Hut**.

Macalister Springs is a very reliable water source and worth a visit if you were unable to locate water the night before. Return via the same route to the junction of the Cross Cut Saw. The Crosscut Saw is a scramble along a narrow ridge and is not for those with a fear of heights. This traverse will lead you over the summit of Mount Buggery, through horrible Gap and to the broad summit of Mount Speculation. Continue over the summit, heading north east and descend to Speculation Road and a reliable water source and campsite at Camp Creek.

Day 5: Speculation Road to King Hut (12.3km)

Heading north north west continue along Speculation Road for approximately 7.2km and locate Muesli Spur to the west. The trail along the spur is reasonably well worn and should be easy to follow as it descends steeply towards the King River in the Valley below.

At the end of Muesli Spur you will again intersect Speculation Road. Turn left (almost straight ahead) at this point and follow Speculation Road then King Basin Road for approximately 1.4km until you reach **King Hut** and an open grassy campsite.

Day 6: King Hut to Craigs Hut (13.5km)

Follow King Basin Road north west for approximately 6.4km and locate McCormacks Trail on the south side of the road. Follow the trail along a broad spur for 3.2km to the junction of Circuit Road. Turning left, follow the road a short distance (200m) to continue your ascent along McCormacks Trail. After approximately 1.7km you will again reach Circuit Road. Turn right at this point and follow the road for 1km where you will locate the Craigs Hut. Walk on your left. Follow this trail to the top of the knoll and **Craigs Hut**. Here you will find grassy flats for camping, fire pits and toilet facilities.

Day 7: Craigs Hut to Mount Buller (13.3km)

From Craigs hut, locate the Clear Hills Track and follow it in a south westerly direction towards the summit of Mount Stirling (1749m). There are a number of huts in the area of Mount Stirling providing emergency refuge to visitors. **Bluff Spur Hut**, west of the summit, was erected as a memorial to a pair of skiers who died of exposure on the mountain. **Geelong Grammar School Hut**, north east of the summit, is owned by Geelong Grammar School and is used during cross country skiing by students from the Timbertop campus.

Follow the Howqua Gap trail south from Mount Stirling and descend 2.1km along the ridge to a trail junction at Howqua Gap. Turn west and follow Corn Hill Track along Woolly Butt Spur past **Howqua Gap Hut** to Corn Hill Road. After a short distance, turn right onto the Wombat trail and follow this west to the junction of Stirling and Corn Hill Roads.

Continue along Stirling Road until you locate the first Village Circuit trail on your left. Alternatively you could follow the Split Rock trail which runs parallel to Stirling Road. Once on the Village Circuit trail, follow this along its length until you reach The Avenue. Turn right then a quick left before the car park and follow the trail back to Athletes Walk and the end of the circuit.

Useful Phone Numbers

Mt Buller Ranger: Nigel watts

0417598584

Mansfield Police email: mansfield.uni@police.vic.gov.au

Mansfield Visitor Information Centre

03) 5775 7000

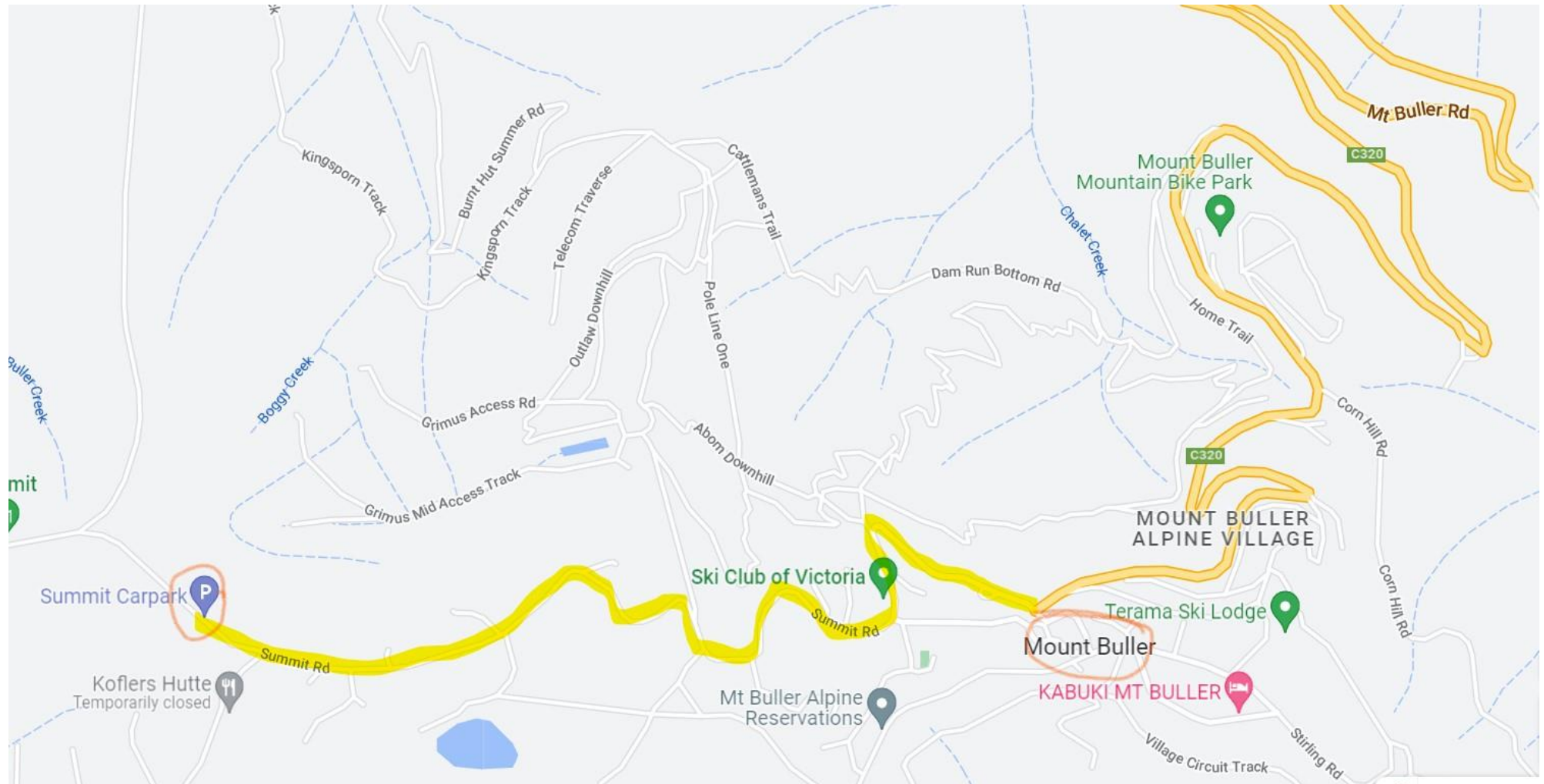
Victoria Parks

131963

Mt Buller Management Board

03) 57776077

MT Buller Village Map



Drive along Mt Buller Road keeping the Village Square (circled) to your left and continue along Summit Rd to the end.

A quick walk to the Mt Buller Summit and back will take about 30mins.

Finding Water Buller Huts Trail – John Hillier

Day 1: Mount Buller to Eight Mile Flat (17.3km approx).

Water is available from the Howqua River at Eight Mile Flat.

Day 2: Eight Mile Flat to Bluff Hut (12.5km approx).

Water is available from a rainwater tank attached to the hut but do not rely on this as the hut is accessible by 4WD and can often be dry.

Day 3: Bluff Hut to Hells Window (13.5km approx).

Water is often available south of the campsite in the gully which is Hell Fire Creek. Descend along a faint trail, turning right on reaching the creek to access the most reliable source in the area. It is important to note that this creek is often not flowing during summer and should not be relied upon.

Day 4: Hells Window to Speculation Road (13.6km approx)

Water can be located at the head of the gully at Camp Creek which passes under Speculation Road.

Day 5: Speculation Road to King Hut (12.3km approx)

Water is available from the King River.

Day 6: King Hut to Craigs Hut (13.5km approx)

Water is available from a rainwater tank near Craigs Hut but do not rely on this as the hut is accessible by 4WD and can often be dry.

Day 7: Craigs Hut to Mount Buller (13.3km approx)

Water is available from the Mount Buller Resort.

This is a challenging hike that should not be underestimated. Do not attempt this hike during Summer or Winter.

This hike requires that you have a sufficient level of equipment (in good working order), fitness and self-reliance. It is vital that you take personal responsibility for ensuring you are prepared

The Bushwalker's Code of Conduct

Minimal Impact Bushwalking

We leave no trace

- We leave campsites better than we found them.
- We use existing fireplaces or carry cooking equipment when possible, and do not scar the landscape with fire rings.
- We comply with fuel-stove only requirements.
- We remove our rubbish from the bush and bury human waste away from watercourses.
- We do not pollute the ground and waterways with soaps and detergents.
- We do not remove plants or rocks from National Parks.
- We do not disturb native wildlife.
- We avoid easily damaged places such as peat bogs, cushion moss, swamps and fragile rock formations.
- We use existing tracks where possible and avoid creating multiple tracks which lead to erosion.

We preserve Australia's bio-security

- We seek to protect the natural environment from the negative impacts of pests, diseases and weeds. [Learn more](#)
- We clean our clothing, equipment, cars, wheels and vessels to prevent the spread of pathogens and diseases that threaten bio-security. [Learn more](#)
- We report significant or unusual pests, diseases and weeds.

We mitigate incidents

Because incidents and rescues have the greatest impact on the environment:

- We prepare for, and carefully plan each trip
- We share our trip intentions
- We act safely
- We are self-reliant
- We seek appropriate training in remote area first aid and rescue

We take responsibility for acting safely

- We always carry clothing and equipment appropriate to our planned activity
- We carry first aid kits and are trained in first aid appropriate to our activities.
- We do not rely solely on GPS systems, but carry a map and compass, which we know how to use.
- We do not rely on mobile phone coverage for dealing with an emergency, but carry a Personal Locator Beacon and/or satellite phone when appropriate.
- We prepare an exit plan as part of our emergency planning.
- We check the safety status of our destinations before entering, observe the safety instructions of park rangers, and do not enter closed National Parks.
- We advise appropriate authorities, friends or relatives of our walking plans
- We walk in groups of three or more so that there are sufficient people to summon help in an emergency.
- We keep emergency contact details updated on our club website
- We only light fires when it is safe to do so, and ensure they are fully extinguished.
- We ensure the safety and well-being of all children entrusted to our care on a bushwalk.
- We engage in bushwalking activities unimpaired by the consumption of alcohol or use of drugs.

We are self-reliant

- We carry sufficient food and water in order to survive unexpected delays.
- We wear and carry appropriate clothing and equipment for our comfort and safety in expected weather conditions, and carry gear to suit the worst possible conditions we are likely to encounter.
- We ensure we have sufficient training, experience and expertise to safely carry out our planned activity.

We respect fellow bushwalkers

- We welcome people from all walks of life irrespective of gender, age, race, religion, culture, colour, sexuality; and behave in an harmonious manner.
- We appreciate difference and welcome learning from others, building relationships based on mutual respect.
- We do not tolerate bullying, harassment or discrimination in any form.
- We encourage, respect and support our leaders as competent and motivated leaders are essential to the success of our activities.
- We respect the right of our leaders to accept or reject walker applicants for specific activities based upon the assessed degree of difficulty and the assessed competence of individual walkers.
- We respect the right of bushwalkers to enjoy the peace and quiet of the bush without undue disturbance from technology.
- We help fellow bushwalkers in need, in situations such as: assisting with emergency communications, offering medical aid for which we are qualified, carrying the gear of an injured person, or sharing equipment.

We respect indigenous culture

- We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we walk.
- We treat sites of spiritual or cultural significance with respect.
- We obtain permission from traditional landowners or the relevant land manager to visit sensitive areas.
- We do not damage aboriginal rock art or camp under overhangs that contain aboriginal rock art.

We respect landowners

- We respect landowners and do not trespass on their land.
- We leave farm gates as we find them.
- We respect the rules of National Parks, and other land managers, regarding camping conditions, maximum numbers in wilderness areas, pets, permitted activities and park closures.

Although these Safety Tips are not part of the Bushwalker's Code, this information is provided for your guidance.

Safety Tips

- Plan what you will do in an emergency and maintain a current first aid qualification so that you know how to handle illness and injuries.
- If possible carry a satellite phone as it has global coverage and will allow you to inform emergency services of your needs. Otherwise, carry a mobile phone, but be aware that it may not have coverage in remote areas or national parks. Consider battery life and take a recharger if necessary.
- Even if you have a GPS, carry a map and compass and Personal Locator Beacon (PLB). Your PLB must be registered with [AMSA](#) and is essential in wilderness areas.

Emergency contact

- Before heading off complete a Trip Intention Form and give it to a responsible person who will check that you have returned on time. [Register](#) your trip at selected police stations or national park offices.
- Inform your contact when your group has safely returned.
- If in distress contact the emergency services on **Triple Zero (000)**. If you are in distress and need assistance and have no other means of communication, set off your Personal Locator Beacon (PLB). Remain near your PLB and be prepared with food and shelter to wait for a response. This may take several hours, or longer if conditions are not suitable for flying, or if a ground team needs to reach you. Make yourself visible from the air with a brightly coloured sheet of fabric, or if safe, make a smoky fire. Extinguish any fire entirely when the

helicopter approaches and remain in front of the helicopter within the pilot's field of vision. Pack up and secure your gear against the helicopter downdraft so your gear is not lost and the rescue site is left as untouched as possible.

Extract from: [Trail Hiking Australia](#)

In 2003, the **essential list** was revised as part of the seventh edition of *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills* to keep up with modern equipment. The current edition, 8th edition continues with the new essentials list with no major revisions. The new list takes a “systems” or functional approach.

The Current The Ten Essentials

1. **Navigation.** [Topographic map](#) and [assorted maps](#) in waterproof container plus a magnetic [compass](#), optional altimeter or [GPS](#).
2. **Sun protection.** Sunglasses, sunscreen for lips and skin, hat, clothing for sun protection.
3. **Insulation.** Hat, gloves, jacket, extra clothing for coldest possible weather during current season.
4. **Illumination.** Headlamp, flashlight, batteries. LED bulb is preferred to extend battery life.
5. **[First-aid supplies](#)**, plus [insect repellent](#).
6. **[Fire](#).** Butane lighter, matches in waterproof container.
7. **[Repair kit and tools](#).** Knives, multi-tool, scissors, pliers, screwdriver, trowel/shovel, duct tape, cable ties, pole repair sleeve.
8. **Nutrition.** Add extra [food](#) for one additional day (for emergency). Dry food is preferred to save weight and usually needs water.
9. **[Hydration](#).** Add extra 2 litres of water for one additional day (for emergency).
10. **Emergency shelter.** Tarp, bivouac sack or space blanket, plastic tube tent, jumbo trash bags, insulated sleeping pad.

The textbook recommends supplementing the *ten essentials* with:

- Portable water purification and water bottles
- Signaling devices, such as a **[whistle](#)**, mobile phone, two-way radio, satellite phone, unbreakable signal mirror or flare, laser pointer.

I would also add: 5M light-weight rope

- Spare cord or string
- Spare tent pegs 1-2
- River crossing shoes

Some experts recommend having duplicates of the Essentials in different sized kits: in pockets, on key rings, in pocket kits, belt pouches, belt packs, day packs, and backpacks.