

WALKING IN THE BUSH

What's The Problem

Walking in a straight line in the bush can often be quite difficult

- Most people have a tendency to favour their preferred hand, i.e. a right-handed person will tend to curve right and left-handed person will tend to curve left.
- Each time you deviate from your course you run the risk of losing your line.
- Deviations may occur because of
 - Lack of concentration,
 - Tiredness
 - Obstacles such as trees, scrubs, rocks, boulders, depressions, waterways, swamps and a host of other things.
- Compasses help but do not solve all the problems.

Solutions

- A GPS will go along way to solving all your problems, particularly if you can utilise the 'Goto' function. However, GPS's are not infallible – batteries fail, electronics sometimes let you down
- '**Sighting Ahead**' can keep you on line and help get you out of trouble in an emergency

Sighting Ahead

The underlying principle is to use landmarks to guide you in the direction you want to go.

- Use your compass or map to determine your bearing
- Sight along your compass or map and pick out a prominent feature in your line of sight – the further away the better but there are possible problems (see below).
- Without referring to your compass or map, proceed to the landmark.
- Repeat the last two steps as necessary to get you to where you want to be.

Limitations

The 'sighting ahead' method does have limitations.

- Sometimes it is not possible to sight more than a few metres ahead - accuracy improves with distance. You can improve your accuracy by vigilance and by teaming.
 - The first person remains at the starting position,
 - The second person proceeds to the limit of the sighting,
 - The first person adjusts the position of the second person to the left or right, if necessary, and the second person then holds position,

- The first person then joins the second person, and
 - The exercise is repeated.
- Landmarks in the distance can change their appearance as you approach, particularly when proceeding through uneven and/or scrubby bush. Be vigilant.

Using the Sun

When absolute accuracy is not a necessity, you may be able to use the sun as a guide. For instance, you may be heading to a track or road that you know crosses your line of travel. Or you may be heading towards a clearing where your vehicle is parked.

- Use your GPS or compass to get you started in the right direction
- If the sun is behind you, take note of where your shadow falls, eg. At 11 o'clock over your left shoulder, and keep it there.
- If the sun is in front of you, do the same with its position (although this can be more tiring and demanding)
- For short walks, the movement of the sun shouldn't pose any problems.
- For longer walks you should take fresh readings every 30 minutes or so.