

SOME USEFUL RESOURCES

General information

Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, *Prospecting on Crown Land in Western Australia*

WorkSafe, *Old mine workings – stay out and stay alive*

Communications devices

Australian Maritime Safety Authority
beacons.amsa.gov.au

Bushwalking Victoria, *Bushwalking manual*
bushwalkingmanual.org.au

Bush Search and Rescue, Victoria
www.bsar.org

Weather

Bureau of Meteorology, *Forecasts and warnings*
www.bom.gov.au

Bureau of Meteorology, *Current tropical cyclones*
www.bom.gov.au/cyclone

River conditions, floods and fire

Bureau of Meteorology, *Rainfall and river conditions*
www.bom.gov.au/australia/flood/

Department of Fire and Emergency Services of Western Australia
www.dfes.wa.gov.au

North Australia and Rangelands Fire Information
www.firenorth.org.au

Emergency services

Royal Flying Doctor Service
www.flyingdoctor.org.au

Western Australia Police Force
www.police.wa.gov.au

Travelling in remote areas

WorkSafe, *Mines Safety Matters – Travelling in remote locations*

Royal Flying Doctor Service, *Emergency Aeromedical Retrieval*
www.flyingdoctor.org.au/what-we-do/aeromedical-retrieval/

Outback Travel Australia, *Outdoors – Your Health and Safety in the Outback*
www.outbacktravelsaustralia.com.au/destinations/safety-issues

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Prospecting in remote areas



STAY IN TOUCH AND STAY ALIVE!



Prospecting is a hobby and profession enjoyed by thousands of people across the State. Whether you are going out for a day trip or are gone for weeks at a time, the same level of attention to safety should be practised.

The Western Australian environment is diverse and often harsh with extremes of weather and terrain. The distances between communities, towns and properties are extensive even in a motor vehicle. If something goes wrong – be it medical, mechanical or changing road or weather conditions – it can be harder to find you and take longer for help to arrive.

PLANNING A TRIP

A lot of effort is given to identifying a prospective area, obtaining a Miner's Right and getting the land holder's permission to prospect or fossick. The next steps are just as vital for every trip you take, regardless of the length of time away, location, and your level of experience. Communication is the key.

You should plan trips according to your experience level. It is often safer to travel with others or as part of a larger group. There are many prospecting and 4WD clubs or associations that can provide support and information, which will help build skills.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Let people know where you are going and how long you expect to be away.

Ask someone reliable to be your home contact. Leave them copies of maps marked with roads you are likely to use and potential camp sites in the areas where you will be prospecting.

You should also provide the home contact with the details of the vehicles and people involved in the prospecting trip, including any mobile or satellite telephone numbers.

Consider having scheduled call times as a way to indicate that you are alright. Always call when you are back from your trip.

Agree on a back-up plan so it is clear when the alarm will be raised if a scheduled call is missed.

Be familiar with the use of your chosen communication devices before leaving home.

COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

There are many communication and location devices available to the prospector.

You are strongly encouraged to use a satellite-based device because telecommunication networks may not cover the area you are in and charging mobile phone batteries may be an issue. These devices can be purchased or hired.

A personal locator beacon (PLB) is also highly recommended. PLBs can be purchased from most quality outdoor stores. When

activated, this small, portable and inexpensive device transmits a message via a satellite to the emergency services. The coordinates transmitted are used by rescuers to pinpoint the location of the person. PLBs should not be confused with global positioning systems (GPS) devices, which also use satellites to locate a position on the ground, but do not transmit location information to emergency services.

Other satellite-based systems include satellite phones and personal satellite tracking systems. The personal satellite tracking systems can help one-way communication in the field by sending pre-prepared messages via a satellite-based provider. Locators can be tracked using the internet. Some have emergency alert functions but these may have time delays attached.

IN THE FIELD

Being on foot away from the vehicle and the camp can pose new issues for a prospector. You are exposed to the effects of climate, terrain and how the land is being used. It is recommended that you:

- have a PLB and communications device on you at all times

- carry adequate water and food for the trip (4-6 litres of water per person per day, more in hot or humid conditions)
- have a suitable first aid kit and the medications you need
- have an emergency kit (e.g. matches, whistle, mirror, thermal blanket)
- wear appropriate clothing and footwear for the conditions.

Before leaving the camp or vehicle, locate yourself in the field (e.g. use a tracking device such as a GPS, maps, compass, flagging tape). It is easy to become disorientated so check your location regularly.

Be vigilant around old mining centres and workings. Look out for hazards such as obscured shafts or other mine workings, collapsing or slumping ground, old equipment and abandoned chemicals.

The advice is simple:

STAY IN TOUCH AND STAY ALIVE!

If prospecting or fossicking on farms, stations or mining tenements, be mindful of farming, pastoral and mining or exploration activities.

Keep up-to-date with conditions while in the field by contacting:

- Local Shire – road and weather updates; water and fuel sources
- Landowners – ground, road and track conditions; stock and vehicle movements; planned burn offs; mining and exploration activities such as haulage, ground surveys and drilling
- Police – road conditions, safety alerts.

