



Community Safety Advice

Beachcombing

How to stay safe when beachcombing



Disclaimer

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BCN recommends that users exercise their own skill and care with respect to their use of this document and any activity described. These documents are not to be used as independent professional advice and users should obtain their own appropriate professional advice for any activities listed.

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Definitions

Hazard: A hazard is a source or a situation with the potential for harm in terms of human injury or ill-health, damage to property, damage to the environment, or a combination of these.

Risk: A risk is the chance of something happening that will have a negative effect.

PPE: PPE refers to anything used or worn to minimise risk to workers' health and safety. This may include, but is not limited to: gloves, glasses, ear plugs, etc.

Should you be conducting these activities?

Before entering a natural area to perform any activities, research if you need a permit or written/verbal approval to do so. Consider joining a local environment group to participate under their approvals and insurance. For local groups on the Bellarine, head here:

www.environmentbellarine.org.au/cb_pages/groups_and_organisations.php



Emergency Contacts

Police, ambulance, fire – **000**
Poisons Information Centre – **13 11 26**

General tips

Heading to a beach to do a beachcomb is an enjoyable activity to do if you want to explore the wonders of the intertidal zone. However, there are always safety concerns when you are entering a natural area. Below are some general tips to ensure your ongoing safety, and the following pages describe some of the more common hazards and how you can act to avoid them.

This list is not exhaustive and acts as a guide only. BCN are not liable for any injury, damage or loss caused as a result of any beachcombing or related activities.

- Respect all wildlife and reduce disturbance as much as possible
- Abide by all laws regulations that relate to you or the area that you are visiting
- Bring a friend or family member with you
- Make sure you have a fully charged phone in the event of an emergency
- Pack food, water and/or medicine if you intend to be outdoors for multiple hours
- Monitor the weather forecast before and during your activity and consider rescheduling if extreme (high heat, cold, storm, etc). Monitor weather here: <http://www.bom.gov.au/>



How you can avoid general hazards

Please note: This list is not comprehensive and Bellarine Catchment Network are not liable for any injury, damage or loss as a result of the participant encountering any of these hazards or any other hazards not listed whilst undertaking the described activities.

SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be careful when walking on a sharp incline or decline;• Identify and avoid holes on land and in the water;• Identify and avoid loose, uneven ground or surfaces;• Identify and avoid trip hazards such as branches; and• Consider wearing booties.
SNAKE BITE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and avoid high risk areas – tall grass, etc;• Learn how to treat a snake bite in an emergency;• Avoid approaching snakes and advise other people around you if one is seen; and• Consider wearing PPE (gloves, enclosed shoes)
BITES & STINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid putting hands in dark areas, under rocks, etc;• Identify and avoid insect nests, rock crevices, unknown marine animals;• Advise others in vicinity; and• Consider wearing PPE (gloves, enclosed shoes)
COLD WEATHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wear warm clothing (wetsuit) and have extra layers available;• Have warm drinks frequently;• Avoid long periods in exposed weather or when wet, windy and cold;• Consider postponing activities if weather is unfavourable.
HOT WEATHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wear light clothing and a broad brimmed hat;• Apply reef safe sunscreen at regular intervals;• Drink cool water regularly;• Avoid working long periods in exposed sun, wind etc; and• Consider postponing activities if weather is unfavourable.

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SHARP OBJECTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be alert of sharp objects in the water or on land and avoid them;• Consider wearing PPE (gloves, enclosed shoes, glasses)
REPETITIVE STRAIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rotate tasks and avoid doing one activity for more than 1 hour;• Conduct warm up stretches and movement activity to reduce chance of strain injury;• Have straight back and bent knees when performing tasks that require lifting and lowering;• Maintain regular rest breaks, rotate tasks alleviate strain to muscle groups.
TRAFFIC (WATER AND FOOT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Considering wearing high visibility clothing;• Avoid being unnecessarily close to boat ramps and jettys;• Regularly look up and check your surroundings;• Be respectful of other recreational users around you.
WATER QUALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be aware and regularly monitor water quality alerts through the EPA (https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/);• Check water conditions (e.g. wave height, wind) to determine if the water is safe to enter;• Regularly monitor water and weather conditions during your activity and stop monitoring if conditions become unsafe.