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**[www.dmp.wa.gov.au/ResourcesSafety](http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/ResourcesSafety)**

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This publication is available on request in other formats for people with special needs.

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**The advice provided in this pamphlet is basic safety and health information. Ensure you are familiar with your site procedures and, if uncertain, discuss this information with your supervisor and safety and health representative.**

## Mine safety matters

# Travelling in remote locations



## THE HAZARDS

Extreme weather conditions, remoteness and vast distances in Western Australia, together with rarely travelled roads, mean that if you break down or get lost, you may not be found for some time.

Extremes of climate can bring on dangerous medical conditions. If you are not prepared, the consequences of being stranded in remote areas can be serious or even fatal.

Rough road surfaces and changing road conditions such as washouts and corrugations can make roads impassable and damage vehicle components, sometimes stranding drivers.

## WHAT CAN HAPPEN

Vehicle and other equipment breakdowns can leave you stranded while working in remote areas. Even if your approximate whereabouts are known and you were expected to check in regularly, rescue can take several days.

People can survive for long periods without food, but the human body is ill-equipped to cope with dehydration, which affects decision making and reduces coordination — essential skills for survival in an emergency situation.

Dehydration, heat stroke and hypothermia can be caused by extreme weather conditions at certain times of the year.

## SAFE WORK PRACTICES

- Plan all trips and ensure that someone at your base knows your plan
- Check on latest road conditions and weather forecasts before setting out
- Arrange a schedule of times when you will contact your base, and keep to the schedule
- Your base contact should be briefed to arrange a search as soon as a scheduled contact is missed. There should be a procedure in place concerning the time lapse before contacting emergency services (usually 24 hours)
- The four vital requirements to support life are **water, shelter, warmth** and **food**. Always ensure you set out with adequate supplies of, and provision for, these to sustain you in the event that you are stranded.

This is important even if you are planning to go to a remote area for only a short period

- Ensure that you take appropriate communications and location equipment for the area you are going to, and that you and your base know how to use them. These may include a long-range radio or mobile satellite phone, global positioning system, emergency position-indicating radio beacon (EPIRB) and maps
- Ensure that your vehicle is suitable for the terrain you plan to travel through, and that it has been adequately maintained to minimise the risk of breakdown
- Carry out an itemised pre-start check of your vehicle before every departure
- Ensure that your vehicle has a dual battery system and both batteries are in excellent working condition
- Carry essential spare parts, tools and recovery equipment, and ensure you know how to use them. Carry at least two spare wheels with tyres
- Carry a suitable first aid kit and ensure that at least one member of your team knows how to administer first aid
- Familiarise yourself with the symptoms of dehydration and how to treat them
- Never leave your vehicle if it breaks down. It is easier for rescue parties to find a vehicle than a person
- Check weather forecasts before you depart and while you are away, and change your plans or delay the trip if necessary. Ensure your base contact is informed of any changes
- Avoid working or travelling alone in remote locations wherever possible

- Avoid travelling through deep or fast flowing rivers or water courses
- Read, understand and follow any company standards for remote travel policies and procedures
- Contact local government authorities for advice on road conditions
- Ask to attend a survival course if you regularly work in remote areas

Remember, the first rule of survival is **don't panic**.

There are many useful reference books available on remote area travel.

Information on assessing the risk associated with remote locations is given in sections 2 and 4 of the guidance note on *Working Alone* available at [www.worksafe.wa.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au)



# Travelling in remote locations