

IBSC – ‘Late Back’ Procedure

- Every IBSC Party heading out should leave a ‘route card’ with a responsible person to act a monitor.
- The monitor can be in another party from the same trip or via the Trips: WhatsApp channel if there is only one party on the trip (ie a small day trip).
- The route card should list: 1) who is in the party, 2) the general plan for the day, 3) any emergency kit carried and 4) the time expected back.
- At the end of the day when safe back, you must let the monitor know.
- If a party is late back, follow emergency procedures and do not hesitate to call 999 and ask for Police, then Mountain Rescue.

IBSC ‘Late Back’ Procedure – Guidance

It is very important that when any Club party heads out in the hill for a tour, that somebody not in the party knows what your plan for the day is and when you are expected back - mobile phone coverage is poor in the mountains and this information could be vital for raising help in the event of an incident. This procedure sets out some practical ways to do this and applies to all Club trips.

1. Make a Route Card

The tried and tested way of doing this is to make a ‘route card’. Your route card should say:

- Who is in the party;
- What the ‘general plan’ for the day is and the expected time back. The ‘general plan’ is just that – it doesn’t have to be some leg-by-leg table of bearings and distances.
- What emergency kit they have with them (Group shelter, any form of Emergency communications like a Personal Locator Beacon - PLB)

Showing the ‘general plan’ can be done lots of ways. Use what works best in the circumstances:

- Write a short description. e.g:

“Bob, Jane and Mike. 18/2/23. Heading to Ben Macdui summit from the Cas car park, up the Fiacaill Cas Ridge, over the Plateau to the summit, returning via Cairn Lochain and Lurchers Gully. Expected back 4pm. Group shelter and PLB carried.”

- Draw the route on a map using pencil, or whiteboard marker pen if the map is in a case and then use your phone to take a picture/s of the route. You can also use this to note who is in the party and other info.
- If you have digital mapping on your computer or phone you can take a screenshot of it and then use a paint/drawing app to like Google Photos to sketch out the route.

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- If following a guidebook route, you could use your phone to take a picture of the guidebook route.

2. Agree a ‘Monitor’

You need to leave your route card with a responsible person to act as your ‘Monitor’. On most weekend, and bigger day trips, there will be more than 1 club party heading out: e.g. a trip with 12 members, will normally have 2 or 3 separate parties heading off to do different objectives each day. In that case your monitor can be someone in one of the other parties – basically each party can look out for the other. If internet is available, you can use the trip WhatsApp group to post the route card so it is accessible to everyone on the trip. If no internet is available, write it down.

Small trips with only 1 party. If it’s a small trip and there is only one party, then you will have to leave the route card with someone not on the trip. In this case, the Route Card must be left in the dedicated Club “Trips: Route Cards” WhatsApp channel. This is only available to Trip Contacts to post Route Cards to and the ‘Monitor’ will be either the club Safety Officer, President or other specified committee member.

You should be very clear who your monitor is and they must have agreed to act as the monitor. Do not have too many people acting as your Monitor – this can lead to confusion and inaction (‘I thought you were watching’).

3. On the Hill

Changes of Plan? Don’t worry about minor changes to plan – touring is often not about following some rigid plan, but going where the snow is best and safest. But if you totally change objective during the day (i.e. go to a different mountain!), try to send a message to whoever is monitoring to let them know (posting to the relevant WhatsApp is best).

Splitting the Party? If for whatever reason you decide to split the party, then again try to post an update. Splitting the party is generally never a good idea. It can be OK in good weather and less remote locations, but can be disastrous in poor weather, or when the situation is serious/committing. Think carefully before you do it – in poor weather it is better to stick together and all turn back if necessary

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Are you going to be late back? If you know you are going to be late-back, then let your Monitor know.

4. Once you are down off the hill

Once you are down, you **must** tell whoever is monitoring that your party is down safe and sound. That can with a WhatsApp or a phone call. Don’t make them phone you to check!

5. IN AN EMERGENCY

Monitors: What should you do if a party is late back?

DON’T PANIC! It’s fairly normal for folk to be late off the hill in winter. Give it at least a couple of hours, and probably more before doing anything drastic. Exactly what you should do, and how soon, will depend very much on the circumstances (e.g. is the weather calm, or is it a blizzard), but some guidelines are:

- **Communicate.** Try to raise the late-back party by phone or VHF radio. Contact the Club Safety Officer or President – they will have all the emergency contact info for the members of the late-back party and will try to see if they have received a message.
- **Look.** Go out and look for headtorches coming down off the hill (if staying in a hut/bothy)
- **Wait.** Folk in your party may be anxious to leave for home for whatever reason, but you may need them to help with a search, so ask everyone to wait until you are sure all are OK.

If after several hours there is still no sign/contact made, then:

- **Call 999 or 112 and ask for ‘POLICE’ and then ‘MOUNTAIN RESCUE’** and be ready to give all the information from the route card and follow the instructions given to you. If necessary, drive to somewhere you can get a signal. If you have registered for the 999 text service you can use that too.

What if your party has an emergency?

If you have become lost, or there has been an accident of some kind you should:

- **Call 999 or 112 and ask for ‘POLICE’ and then ‘MOUNTAIN RESCUE’** and follow the instructions. Do not wait until the situation has become dire before calling Mountain Rescue – they would far rather know sooner rather than later about a potential problem. Even if you think you can make your own way down to safety, you must call them.
- Let your monitor know that there has been an incident.
- If there is no phone signal, and the party is stopped, make or seek shelter, give first aid to any casualties and **activate your PLB**.

6. International Trips

All club international trips are with qualified Guides and they will take responsibility for late-back procedures.

7. Personal Trips

You should consider adopting a similar procedure for personal trips. If you cannot find a responsible person to act as a monitor, then contact the club Committee and a committee member may be available to act as Monitor, but only with prior agreement.