

## Use of Personal Locator Beacons (PLB's) Guidelines

- NSTC owns a number of PLBs. These are kept in the Club Bus and are available for use on club trips along with other club gear.
- A PLB is not a substitute for thorough trip planning and execution. The club expects all trip leaders and club trip participants to abide by the club's policies and procedures relating to club trips.
- Our policies and procedures are designed to keep trip participants safe and are consistent with the principles set out in the NZ Mountain Safety Council Outdoor

### When to Activate a PLB

- PLBs should generally be activated only in situations of grave and imminent danger.
- Examples would be a major injury to a party member, or a party that has become dangerously trapped by rising floodwaters.
- Before activating a PLB consider whether a mobile phone call to 111 is a practical option. If you are able to talk to the Police you will be able to provide context and receive advice. Notwithstanding the above it would be acceptable to activate the PLB when a person in the party has suffered a lesser injury or an illness that immobilises them to a degree that a rescue by Search and Rescue (SAR) personnel would almost certainly be required anyway. Note that this would not include a simple 'sprain' that may be relieved over time by rest.
- It would also be acceptable to activate the PLB if your party is overdue to the extent that a search will be certainly launched for you (usually at least more than one day overdue). Note that being late out does not, in most circumstances, constitute a life threatening situation. We have a club contact system in place to deal with instances when a trip is overdue.

### What to do once a PLB is Activated

- While waiting for rescue you should look after injured person(s) and attempt to make the party as safe and comfortable as possible. Give consideration to clearing a helicopter landing site if possible.
- If a PLB is inadvertently activated, or it is activated and then decided it was not necessary to do so, do not deactivate it. If the signal from a PLB disappears a search will still be launched and it is preferable for SAR personnel to be able to track an actively transmitting beacon than have to search a wider general area. If a PLB is activated the trip leader (or leader's delegate) must inform the club emergency contact person when the group is safe, as soon as is realistically possible, and then provide a full written account of the incident to the Safety Officer.

### When a Personal PLB is Substituted for a Club PLB

- A personal PLB can be taken instead of a club PLB if the trip leader is advised and the PLB owner agrees to abide by the Club PLB policy, and advises the club emergency contact person(s) with their nominated PLB emergency contact person's name and phone details.
- The personal PLB Emergency contact has a copy of the trip plan and they are advised when the trip is completed. The contact person for the personal PLB is instructed to advise the club emergency contact person asap if they are made aware the PLB has been activated.
- If the conditions above are satisfied and a personal PLB is activated in accordance with the NSTC PLB policy, the PLB owner may request that the Committee, at its discretion, approve the cost of having the personal PLB checked and its battery replaced as appropriate.

## ***Use of NSTC Personal Locator Beacons on Private Trips***

- Club PLBs are not to be taken on private trips. This is essentially due to the additional workload that is imposed on volunteers if a Club PLB is used for private trips. PLBs are available for hire from various sources including many local outdoor shops

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