

New Rules and Requirements for VenMX 2009

It is ESSENTIAL that all Venturers and leaders read this document, as this document supersedes some other information in the Information Circulars.

We want all Venturers to enjoy VenMX, but also for the competition to be completely fair and to be safe.

If you think any of the rules should be removed or changed, please feel welcome to make any suggestions.

Where this document has different requirements to other VenMX documents, it will be this document that applies for 2009.

1. There is a weight limit of 20 kg per venturer to bring on the bus (or via private transport) to VenMX, including 2 litres of water (effectively this means 18 kg of gear). Your gear will be weighed as you leave the bus so please ensure you do NOT exceed this limit. The limit is to ensure that non-competition and competition patrols are limited to the same sorts of equipment for the weekend. VenMX is a lightweight expedition hike, not a base camp. There are plenty of other opportunities for heavy-weight camping for youth in Scouting; VenMX isn't one of them.
2. If you are a competition team, there are still points lost for excess weight actually carried on day 1 (one point lost per kg or part over 14 kg average per member of the patrol). In addition, you are not allowed to hike with a pack weight of more than 16 kg (incl water).
3. Even if you are not participating in the main competition, your patrol is required to participate in the campfire on Sunday night, and to attempt the special tasks during the hike. Unless they have a legitimate excuse, all Venturers are also expected to attend the Scout's Own on Saturday night and to compete in the 'Venturer of the mountain' event on Monday morning (a very short run).
4. Use ONLY the 2009 Equipment list. Do NOT use old lists. Note that the required equipment will be checked and you may not be able to participate if you do not have complying equipment (especially critical safety equipment), so please ensure you bring it.
5. The patrol names for teams will not be allocated until the Friday night of VenMX. You can nominate your own team as per previous years, but if your numbers are too small, you will be combined with other venturers and a patrol name then given on the Friday night. This will avoid confusion with "missing" patrol names and lengthy combined team names (such as Charlie-Foxtrot-Echo-Tango).
6. The organisers will provide your personal ID tag.
7. On Saturday morning, all Venturers will put whatever gear you do not want in your personal, strong, waterproof storage bag and you will not get this back until Sunday night after 7 pm. Note that you will now be allowed to take a clean set of clothes or food/drink items in this storage bag. However, the 20 kg limit (including 2 litres of water) still applies.
8. You will be required to submit your "storage bag" before your equipment is checked off on Saturday morning. This will avoid the potential for anyone to have their gear checked off and then not carry some of it, by storing it for the weekend.
9. Venturers in "non-competition" patrols can separate their remaining gear each morning into a daypack (refer to the list of required daypack equipment) and gear to be carried for you to the next BIV site. This other gear must be put into a strong, waterproof bag (e.g. duffel bag or rucksack).
10. You MUST wear a hat with a brim while walking. Baseball hats will not be acceptable. Points will be deducted if you are seen walking without a hat on.
11. You MUST bring and carry (including non-competition patrols) a strong, waterproof raincoat or poncho etc, and a warm jumper
12. If you bring water in a bladder (e.g. Camelbak bladder), you must bring at least 600 ml of water in another complying container. You cannot just rely on a bladder when walking.
13. We will make additional water available at ONE checkpoint during each day of VenMX, usually in the afternoon. However, you must still take at least 2 litres each morning, and if you need additional water at this re-supply checkpoint, you will lose points.
14. You are allowed to take cameras (including digital cameras) and mobile phones. However, if you take a mobile phone, it is NOT to be used while hiking except for essential safety purposes. Your phone must be turned off while hiking and may be sealed at CP1.

You can unseal the phone for a genuine emergency. Points will be deducted for using the mobile phone for any other reason.
15. You are allowed to bring IPODs or MP3s or other personal sound devices, providing these are not used when walking or during any other formal activity. You can use them during personal recreation time. This is a safety issue as well as a bush etiquette issue; we don't want someone trying to warn you that you are about to step onto a snake, or off a cliff, or some other hazard, and you can't hear. You are not allowed to bring or use "boom boxes". The reason for this is that this is a hike not a base camp. One of the objectives of VenMX is also to get all of us out "close to nature" and we want to disturb the bush and any animals in it the least we can; this includes noise.
16. You will be required to walk in a shirt with a collar and at least short-sleeves. "Tanks" or "Tees" or other shirts that do not have a collar, or which are sleeveless, are not acceptable when walking. Again, a shirt with collar and sleeves provides much better protection against the sun, as well as improved protection against minor cuts and abrasions and insect or plant stings.
17. Your patrol will be able to earn additional points this year for matching walking shirts, or walking hats. The shirts or hats do not need to be identical (but can be), but if not, must clearly have a theme or in some other way indicate that you form a team. Note that walking shirts and hats must still meet the other requirements. See points 10 and 16.
18. You are encouraged (but not required) to bring your Unit flag. Note that camp sites will be allocated to you, so two patrols from the same Unit may not be camping together. You may also make your own patrol flag before the event and bring it along. You could choose the same theme as your patrol shirts or patrol hats.
19. Cooking on fires will no longer be acceptable. You must bring a suitable liquid, gas or solid fuel stove to cook on. This is in keeping with the requirements these days in most national parks and on most recognised walking tracks, due to the "tread lightly" and "leave no trace" philosophy of bushwalking and camping. However, providing there is no fire ban, there will be a camp fire on the Saturday night (as usual), but it will not be for cooking.
20. Since fires are not allowed, tomahawks are also no longer allowed (along with previous bans on machetes, etc)
21. You will be allowed to bring tins. However, glass bottles are still banned. This is for safety reasons and also because of the very long time for glass to decompose. Note that competition teams may lose points for their Saturday evening meal if it is made from tins or "one pack" dehydrated meals. Fresh foods tend to impress the judges!
22. There will be no rubbish disposal from the start of the briefing on Friday evening (about 9 pm) until you reach BIV 3 on Sunday evening. This applies to both competition and non-competition patrols. Therefore, think carefully about what food and drinks you bring with you, and remove all unnecessary packaging before you come. In modern bushwalking, there is no rubbish disposal in the bush, and open fires are generally banned so there is not even a way to get rid of burnable rubbish. Whatever gets packed in, also has to be packed out. This rule change will help us all to focus in on managing our rubbish responsibly in the bush. Make sure you bring a suitable container/strong bag to carry your rubbish in your pack.
23. You will be required to plot every grid reference in your route instructions on your map before you check out from CP1 on each day, and also show your proposed route. If you haven't plotted the grid references correctly, you may lose competition points and will be delayed at CP1.