



FIGURE 7.25 TYPICAL SUSPENSION BRIDGE CROSSING IN TORRES DEL PAINE

Photo: Helen Barnard

7.11 Water hazards

Throughout the course of a trek it is possible to encounter all manner of water hazards from streams and rivers to lakes and marshes. Even hotel swimming pools and beaches at some destinations can present issues. **When planning and especially if there is a likelihood of confronting any water hazards consider acquiring both training and suitable equipment to deal with such issues.**

7.11.1 Lakes

There can be nothing more refreshing at the end of a hard day's trekking than to have a quick dip in a lake. Caution should be exercised, particularly in deep water where it becomes difficult to assess the depth, content and temperature of the water. Often mountain lakes are much colder than anticipated and people have been known to drown due to cramp seizing the muscles (see Figure 7.26).

7.11.2 Marshes

Many foreign guests do not mark marshes and boggy ground in the same way as found on UK

maps. This can make planning and anticipation of such hazards difficult; however observing the vegetation while trekking provides the best indication to these areas. These hazards can be difficult to assess and negotiate, often with hidden issues such as holes, subterranean streams and animals. In many developing countries the stagnant nature of the water found in marshland areas can also present a risk from disease.

7.11.3 Tidal

Treks may start or finish at the coast so a word on the hazards of tidal regions is not misplaced at this point. The nature of the tide and sea in any particular location will be unique and should therefore be treated with caution, especially by people with little experience of the ways of the sea. Tidal ranges and currents are very specific to one location and coupled with the prevailing weather conditions can be very difficult to predict. Without good local knowledge it will be difficult to determine the depth and nature of the seabed and if any undercurrents exist that may catch people unawares. The marine life that inhabits certain locations may also present a risk, once again highlighting the need for research and caution.



FIGURE 7.26 A BREAK FROM THE TREK BUT NOT FROM POTENTIAL HAZARD

Photo: Outlook Expeditions

7.12 River crossings for trekkers

Crossing water is a relatively common challenge facing trekkers in many areas of the world. Without doubt a 'wet' crossing represents a high level of risk to the participants and should not be undertaken if a 'dry', safer alternative is practical. Any leader must conduct a dynamic risk assessment and be confident that the benefits outweigh the risks.

The time of year can have a profound effect on water levels; the monsoon season could see a trek having to make a major detour or having to wait a considerable time while the waters receded enough for a safe crossing. While this may be localised and difficult to plan for, any advanced consideration given could save the itinerary. In practice once all possibilities of a dry crossing or waiting have been discounted a wet crossing is the only option and has to be carefully planned and managed to ensure safety.



FIGURE 7.27 SIMPLE STREAM CROSSING

Photo: Helen Barnard



Leader's Information

Water safety training

A number of organisations have developed modules on supervising groups along rivers, lakes and the sea making this valuable additional training for leaders taking groups to some environments.

... if you are travelling with a person or load, the need to be to disperse the person on top of the snow is also partially due to snow conditions. For snow conditions, you are required to keep a powder snow than are old or icy snow. Some lily to add an extra amount of foot. The smallest size that will be snow conditions and is adequate flotation, much easier to handle with stinging manufac- ture for different weight



RIVER CROSSING FOR TREKKERS

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... OFFERS ON MODERATE THE FOOT LEVEL WHEN

... PHILL. THIS CAN IMPROVE STABILITY AND BALANCE WHILE REDUCING STRESS ON THE LOWER LEG.

... be placed. This should not only take account of body weight but any extra equipment they may

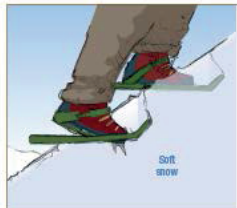


FIGURE 10.00 KICKING STEPS IN SNOW SHOES ON SHORT STEEP SLOPES



FIGURE 10.07 COL DE COU, SWISS-FRENCH BORDER

Photo: Caroline Hale