



Driving Tips

Driving on Bush Tracks

There are many tracks all over the country that are worth exploring, I can assure you they always go somewhere like a beautiful camping spot, or a fishing hole or maybe just to a trig point at the top of a mountain from which you can see forever.

The number one tip when driving on bush tracks is to be **cautious** and don't rush, rushing can lead to damage to your vehicle, to the environment and of course to yourself, always remember the first principle of four wheel driving, which is, **Stop, Get Out and Look** which is followed by the second principle, **Think, Assess and Decide**.

- Ensure that your vehicle is prepared for travelling on bush tracks.
- Survey the track ahead, if possible, looking for hazards such as the track surface, overgrown areas that may limit visibility, any steep accents or descents, the width of the track and blind corners etc.
- Keep windows wound up to within 50mm of closed to prevent tree branches and other obstacles from entering the cab - you could easily lose an eye.
- Select a suitable range and gear to provide sufficient momentum to suit the terrain and still provide adequate vehicle control with engine braking.
- Always position hands on the steering wheel so that the thumbs are on the outside of the wheel, if you go into a hole the steering wheel may spin taking your thumbs with it, this is more prevalent in vehicles without power steering.
- **Communications:** If you have a UHF radio, use it! Communicate between vehicles in your convoy, if travelling alone set your radio to scan to pick up chatter from other vehicles in the area and communicate with them if necessary.
- If travelling on a narrow track let other users, know where you are by broadcasting an all stations call.
- On blind corners or overgrown tracks sound your horn at regular intervals to alert any oncoming traffic.
- Put on headlights and travel on the left hand side of the track if possible.
- On narrow tracks travel as slowly as necessary to be able to take evasive action if you encounter an oncoming vehicle.
- In very difficult terrain, ensure that the track ahead is clear of the preceding vehicle before proceeding as there is always the possibility that the vehicle ahead may have to back up. This can be achieved by the first vehicle broadcasting the word **CLEAR** over the radio when he has cleared the obstacles.

Safe Driving!
Norm Baker