



Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara

A.B.N. 77 261 612 162

PMB 227 Umuwa via Alice Springs NT 0872

Phone: (08) 8954 8111 Fax: (08) 8954 8110

Email: gmapy@anangu.com.au

4WD Safety

Before commencing any journey always complete the following:

- Inspect tyres for possible damage, including the spare(s)
- Tyre pressures for non-bitumen roads should be approximately 35 kPa (5 psi) lower than manufacturers recommended pressure for normal driving.
- Ensure that there is at least 10 litres of fresh water for drinking in your vehicle
- There should be recovery equipment and a sat phone. Even if you don't know how to use it someone who does may arrive to help in an emergency.
- Notify somebody of your trip and expected arrival time
- If in an unfamiliar vehicle make sure that you know how everything functions and operates before driving it

Remember that common sense and road rules apply everywhere – including 'off road'

A four-wheel drive vehicle does not handle like a normal passenger vehicle. It is: -

- Heavier and slower to react to changes of direction.
- Likely to require a greater stopping distance
- More inclined to roll over due to its higher centre of gravity
- Has compromises in suspension and tyres rendering it easier to lose control under any circumstances.

When four wheel driving or bush track driving remember these two rules

1. If unsure of an obstacle – stop, get out and look
2. Once inspected think, assess and decide on your course of action.

The most common obstacle that you will encounter on the APY lands is the road itself! There are several items to be aware of: -

- The roads material of construction (gravel, sand, clay, large stones etc.) The material can have a significant impact upon your driving speed and style. For instance sand can slow the vehicle down and be a cause of unpredictable steering. Gravel can be the cause of a slippery road.

- The surface of the road. Is it smooth, corrugated, full of potholes, undulating or have deep washouts across it?
- The texture of the roads surface. Is it wet, dry, muddy or have patches of bulldust?
- The form of the road. Is it straight, are there many bends, is it sloped heavily to one side?
- The verges at the side of the road. Can you see clearly over them, are there many trees, high vegetation etc that may hide animals?
- The light. Sun glare in the early morning or late afternoon can cause blind spots. Drive slower at night for obvious reasons.

All of the above can cause serious problems if concentration is lost for even a few seconds. **The greater your speed and lower your concentration, the greater your chance of an accident.**

The way that a vehicle is loaded is very important. Four-wheel drive vehicles roll easy due to their high centre of gravity and placing heavy equipment on the roof rack increases their instability, especially on sharp bends or under heavy braking. **ALWAYS** place heavy objects in the back of the vehicle on the floor and behind the safety cage.

Mud and water are potentially serious problems that will occur on the APY lands. The easiest way to keep out of trouble with these two surfaces is to avoid them where possible. Remember that the surfaces at the sides of large pools of water is often soft and cut up by other vehicles. This increases the risk of getting bogged.

When crossing water: -

- Our roads are well made and driving straight through the middle is often the best option.
- If at all unsure about the crossing; stop the vehicle, get out and walk through the water. This may seem unpalatable but the alternative may be a bogged vehicle. Whilst walking through the water ensure that the surface underneath is firm and not too deep (knee high is quite deep). Make sure that there are no submerged obstacles that may damage the vehicle or its tyres. Note where you have traversed the water and make sure that you have a safe exit for the vehicle.
- Ensure that the vehicles front wheel hubs are in the 'Locked' position.
- Engage 4WD low.
- Select first or second gear and enter the water at a speed of about 10 km/h. Maintain this speed for the whole crossing.
- **DO NOT STOP OR ATTEMPT TO CHANGE GEAR.** Water could flood the engine or enter the clutch and cause it to slip.
- After completing the crossing the vehicle should be placed back into an appropriate range and gear.
- When moving again dry out the vehicles brakes by lightly pumping them.

When crossing mud: -

- Mud crossings should be avoided where possible
- If there is no other vehicle with you – do not attempt to cross unless there is no other option.
- Lower tyre pressures by at least 50 – 70 kPa (7 - 10 psi.)
- Inspect track and plan route through the mud.
- Select second or third low range.
- Drive on planned route at a steady speed (10 – 15 km/h is sufficient). **DO NOT CHANGE GEAR**
- If forward momentum stops – disengage gears immediately to prevent wheel spin and digging in or bogging.
- Try to get stones or tree branches under the wheels and the path out. If possible reverse back slightly – but do not spin wheels.
- Drive forward onto stones/branches. Repeat as necessary.
- NB if the vehicle slides off the track the best recovery action may be to obtain assistance by sat phone. If no communication equipment is available – stay with the vehicle. Help will arrive soon.
- Clean under the vehicle at the first opportunity after getting out of the mud.

Vehicle Fires: -

- A common cause is vegetation wrapping around the muffler, therefore if driving over old tracks check under the vehicle frequently.
- Faulty electrical wiring is another cause.
- In the event of a fire – Stop the engine, get everyone out of the vehicle, get the drinking water, get the sat phone and THEN get the extinguisher.
- An extinguisher may be useless on a fire under the vehicle.
- Take extreme care when opening a bonnet for an engine bay fire – a flare up may occur.