

Walking Best Practice Guidance Mar 24 V2

This Guidance is provided:

- a) To assist an Organiser in planning their event;
- b) To highlight risk assessment factors that they need to take into account; and
- c) To prompt event Organisers to include relevant hazards that should be highlighted in their event email / pre-event briefing.

GROUP SIZE ADVICE:

For walks in mountainous or potentially hazardous areas, it is recommended that the group size does not exceed 17, including the leader. A backmarker **MUST** be identified. It is at the leader's discretion if this number is slightly exceeded.

Hazard	Example incidents	Before walk	During or after walk
<p><u>General planning considerations</u> (See below for details of specific hazards)</p>	<p>(See below for specific incidents)</p>	<p>Leader: Carry out route assessment before the event. If practical pre-walk the route, otherwise study maps and other information.</p> <p>Leader: Advise (e.g. by email) walkers in advance of the type of terrain, length of walk, appropriate footwear and any relevant hazards.</p> <p>Leader: Indicate the intended pace of the walk (fast, medium or slow; a walk at more than 3 km/ 2.5 mph is considered to be moderate).</p> <p>Leader: Review forecasted weather conditions on the day prior to the walk and on the morning of the walk and be prepared to re-route or issue a late cancellation email if very poor weather is expected. It may be feasible to announce an adjusted start time to avoid bad weather, but if this is pursued, notification of revised time must occur at the very latest on the day before the walk, and not on the day. (An exception to the latter may occur if the walk takes place during an away residential trip.)</p> <p>Everyone: Check your emails the evening before a walk, and ideally also on the day of the walk before leaving home in the event of any late cancellation.</p> <p>Leader: Either before walk or at the start enquire if there is someone who is prepared to act as backmarker. Offer your own mobile number to participants.</p>	<p>Leader: If there is an accident, then co-ordinate a call for emergency services (different phones will have different reception). If bad reception, then you may need to ask two people to go and call for help.</p> <p>Leader: If someone is injured it may be necessary to split the group. This will depend upon the number of leaders and any first-aiders available.</p> <p>Leader: Must personally oversee safe passage of all walkers over any railway foot crossings. If crossing airstrips, proceed promptly and cautiously and ensure that group is kept together in close formation.</p> <p>Everyone: Keep an eye out for each other, and help the leader where you can.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep up with the group and do not wander off. - If you need to stop for the toilet, let someone know. <p>You must not leave the event without prior discussion with the Leader.</p>

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<p><u>Generic planning considerations</u> <u>continued</u> (See below for details of specific hazards)</p>	<p>(See below for specific incidents)</p>	<p>Leader: Be competent with map reading and navigation. Bring compass, map and mobile phone, and ensure First Aid Kit is carried.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set a suitable pace and stop regularly to allow everyone to catch up. Count people. <p>Everyone: If you are first aid trained let the leader know Everyone: If you are unsure you can cope with the walk then check with the leader.</p> <p>Everyone: Bring a mobile phone with you (if you have one). If you have a compass and/or map bring them along.</p> <p>Everyone: Check weather forecast on the day and choose appropriate clothing.</p> <p>Everyone: If you are first aid trained let the leader know.</p>	<p>Everyone: If there is an accident then help leader by offering your mobile phone to call the emergency services.</p> <p>Everyone: Be prepared (if asked) to be a backmarker.</p> <p>Everyone: If injured person cannot walk then keep them warm until the emergency services arrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not move the injured person if there is a chance of back injury. - If the injured person can walk, then move to safety.
<p><u>Terrain:</u> Roots, low branches, sharp plants., watercourses, hidden obstructions, sudden drops, burrows, quarries, cliffs, flying golf balls.</p>	<p>Trips, slips & falls leading to sprains or broken limbs.</p>	<p>Leader: Advise walkers in advance of possible terrain hazards.</p>	<p>Everyone: Keep away from edge of cliffs or rivers. Keep an eye out for golfers “teeing off” in your direction!</p>
<p><u>Water:</u> Sea, lakes, rivers, stagnant water</p>	<p>Falling, drowning. Weil’s disease (leptospirosis) from still water.</p>	<p>Leader: Advise walkers of possible water hazards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check tides if required. - Avoid entering the water at all times. - Plan to cross rivers by bridges - Cancel or re-route if conditions are bad. 	<p>Everyone: Wash hands after contact with stagnant water and before eating / drinking.</p> <p>Everyone: Contact G.P. if flu-like symptoms are experienced within two months, and inform the G.P. that there is a possibility of Weil’s disease.</p>

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<p><u>Hazardous weather:</u> Heavy rain, strong winds, flooding, fog, lightning</p>	<p>Exposure, injury from debris, slippery surfaces, swept off feet, lightning strike, slipping/falling off edges, avalanches.</p>	<p>Leader: See also the weather-related comments under previous “General Planning Considerations” section.</p> <p>Advise walkers of possible adverse weather hazards. Take into account the number of walkers and how well equipped and fit they are and cancel or re-route the walk if necessary.</p> <p>Everyone : Bring a waterproof top, trousers and gloves. Also warm base layers of clothing may help.</p>	<p>Leader: Consider reversing route and going back.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider taking an alternative route back. - Consider taking shelter until conditions improve. <p>Everyone: Let leader know if you are feeling particularly cold.</p>
<p><u>Hot weather:</u> Hot direct sun, high humidity, overall high temperature</p>	<p>Heatstroke, sunburn or dehydration.</p>	<p>Leader: Advise walkers to bring plenty of water, and dress for hot weather.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have drink stops. - Plan cooler shadier route (e.g. under trees). <p>Everyone: Carry enough water for the duration of the event (at least 2 litres recommended). Bring sun cream, hat, sunglasses & appropriate clothing.</p>	<p>Leader: Find shade and have a break. Allow time for people to have a drink.</p> <p>Leader: Walk can be shortened.</p> <p>Everyone: Let leader know if you are feeling particularly hot, dizzy or faint.</p>
<p><u>Cold weather:</u> Wind chill, icy under foot, snow covered gullies, snowdrifts, sun reflection off snow</p>	<p>Losing footing and breaking bones, dehydration, snow blindness, sunburn, hypothermia.</p>	<p>Leader: Advise walkers to bring water, snacks and to dress for cold weather.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have drink and snack stops. Keep stops short to lessen hypothermia risk. - Plan alternative routes and areas of shelter. <p>Everyone: Wear warm clothing under waterproofs. Keep head covered and wear gloves. A walking stick/pole will help to keep balance in snow. Sunglasses may be needed due to reflected light from snow.</p>	<p>Leader: Seek shelter and reassess route.</p> <p>Leader: Walk can be shortened or curtailed.</p> <p>Everyone: Let leader know if you are feeling particularly cold or numb.</p>

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<u>Walkers getting lost / separated</u>	Exposure, risk of hypothermia, becoming disorientated.	<p>Leader: If there is a large group, then consider having a backmarker.</p> <p>Everyone: Let leader know you are coming, so they know if there is going to be a large group.</p>	<p>Leader: If you lose a person, retrace the route. Call them on their mobile phone. If dangerous conditions, call emergency services.</p> <p>Leader: On residential trips, leave details of route, people count and estimated arrival time back at the accommodation venue.</p> <p>- Ensure the accommodation venue is made aware of safe group return.</p> <p>Everyone: It is strongly recommended that you stay with the group. If you want to leave, this MUST be discussed with the leader prior to your decision being final. If you insist on leaving the group it will be your responsibility to get back.</p> <p>Always let the leader and accommodation venue know you have arrived back safely.</p>
<u>Road traffic:</u> Walking along a road	Hit by a vehicle or animal.	<p>Leader: Where possible plan route to avoid walking on busy roads.</p> <p>Leader: Consider re-planning if route will require walking on roads at night. If night walking on roads will occur then warn walkers that they should wear fluorescent tabards/jackets and carry a torch.</p> <p>Everyone: If walking on roads at night then you should bring a torch and wear a fluorescent tabard/ jacket.</p>	<p>Everyone: Take care crossing roads.</p> <p>Everyone: If walking along a road, then walk facing the traffic and in single file.</p> <p>-Use paths or verges whenever possible. -On sharp right-hand bends walk on the left. -Avoid walking after dark.</p> <p>- If walking after dark it's essential to display a torch at the front and rear of the group. You should wear a fluorescent tabard/ jacket.</p>
<u>Animals:</u> Loose dogs, snakes, bulls, cattle, horses.	Attacked, bitten or trampled	<p>Leader: Advise before walk if there is a known problem.</p> <p>If a walker comes with a dog then it MUST be kept on a lead as per IOG guidelines. Animals have attacked the group due to dogs in the past.</p>	<p>Leader: Re-route around problems as they arise.</p> <p>Everyone:</p> <p>-Keep to footpath. -Wash bites in clean water and cover. Contact 111 as soon as possible after walk. -If anyone is bitten by a snake, contact emergency services immediately. The victim must be kept still.</p>

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<p><u>Insect Bites:</u> <u>Spores from ferns:</u></p>	<p>Allergic reaction, Lyme disease from ticks</p>	<p>Leader: Advise before walk if there is any particularly known problem location. Be aware, however, that tick bites can occur in any forest or field terrain.</p> <p>Everyone: -Use insect repellent. -Keep skin covered. -Avoid bracken where possible.</p>	<p>Everyone: Tick Bites</p> <p>It is suggested that ticks should be removed ASAP with tick removal tool. It important to keep the dead tick. In the event of rash or symptoms developing the tick can be tested to confirm Lymes disease. Seek advice on how to remove the tick. Report tick bites to 111 within 24 hours.</p> <p>If you were not aware you had been bitten but develop a “target” rash, then visit your G.P. as soon as possible.</p>
<p><u>Medical / Fitness conditions</u></p>	<p>Epileptic fit, heart attack, collapse due to exhaustion.</p>	<p>Leader: Ask if anyone who has a medical / fitness condition to let you know privately before setting off. Discuss the condition with them and consider the suitability of the walk. Be prepared to tell them that it would be too risky for them to participate.</p> <p>Everyone: Let the leader know of any medical / fitness condition you have.</p> <p>Everyone: Bring any suitable medication with you, and know how to use it.</p> <p>Everyone: Be aware that some rides may be particularly strenuous due to length, gradients etc. The leader may feel that you are not suitable for a given Walk. Try to accept this difficult situation with good grace.</p>	<p>Everyone: It is your responsibility to tell the leader of any worsening of your medical / fitness condition. Work with the leader to agree a suitable plan of action.</p>