

Walk Leader Checklist

Although these notes have been prepared for walk leaders, members of a walking party should be aware and therefore appreciate the work being done by walk leaders. Following their instructions can only lead to a safer and more pleasurable walk. Don't forget - individual walkers are responsible for their own safety.

1) Pre-Walk Activities

a) undertake reconnaissance of walk in company with back-marker :-

- note hazards encountered on walk and their potential for harm
- note controls which are already in place (if any) which limit / prevent the potential for harm
- develop additional controls / alternative routes if necessary to reduce potential for harm / injury as far as possible
- make a note of public conveniences, public telephones, refreshment stops etc. which occur along the route of the walk
- develop cut-off points in case of bad weather or emergencies
- make a note of the major points of interest, flora and fauna etc along the walk

b) develop a contingency plan with your back-marker

c) ensure that you and your back-marker have the following equipment :-

- whistle
- map and compass
- means of raising the alarm / means of communication
- some energy-dense food (chocolate etc) for emergency use
- some additional liquids
- sun protection
- basic first-aid kit

(you might also consider packing some generic spare weatherproof clothing - survival bag, hat, cape, plastic mac - which could be used in an emergency)

d) undertake some research into the major points of interest on the walk so that a running commentary can be given during the walk if necessary

2) Start of the Walk

a) introduce yourself and your backmarker

b) undertake pre-walk briefing and include these points (but try not to be too heavy-handed) :-

- warn walkers not to walk in front of leader or behind back-marker
- instruct walkers that the leader's / backmarker's safety instructions are to be followed at all times
- brief the group on the hazards on the walk and what precautions have been taken
- remind walkers of the basic equipment they are expected to have, e.g. footwear

and clothing suitable to the walk being undertaken and the weather conditions, liquids, food and / or means to acquire refreshments dependant on length of walk being undertaken etc.

- remind walkers they are responsible for their own safety and to bring to the attention of the leader or back-marker any problems they might encounter on the walk
- remind walkers to look out for the welfare of other walkers and advise the leader and backmarker if fellow-walkers are experiencing difficulties
- remind walkers to observe both the highway code when walking on roads and the country code at all times
- warn walkers not to leave the group without telling the leader or backmarker
- mention expected highlights / sights of the walk, estimated times of drink stops, lunch stops and estimated time of finish

c) count walkers

3) During the Walk

a) gauge the pace of the walk and adjust as necessary for comfort of all

b) include toilet breaks

c) halt group ahead of hazards and issue instruction accordingly

d) allow enough time for slower walkers to catch up and catch their breath before moving on

e) at drink stops, meal breaks, state length of time allotted for the break and give 5 minute warning before re-starts. Repeat head-count after stops / breaks.

f) keep in contact with back-marker

g) keep an eye open for walkers experiencing difficulty

h) keep contingency plan in mind at all times

i) don't forget to point out the major points of interest along the walk - landmarks, highlights, views etc, and develop a running commentary

Standard Controls in Operation.

Walk leader and back marker have surveyed the walk and noted potential hazards. They will also make sure that group members have the appropriate footwear and clothing for the walk to be taken. In the event of an emergency, the leader is equipped with a first aid kit, mobile telephone, whistle, map and compass.

Weather.

In the event of severe weather conditions, e.g. gales, extreme heavy rain, lightning storms or blizzards, the walk will be cancelled. Safety of the walking party will always be of the utmost importance.