

Bridgnorth and District Walking Club

Guidance for Walk Leaders – August 2023

1. Risks and insurance cover

Please read the document “Guidance for Members” in conjunction with this one. It covers a number of risks that might arise and tells you how members should have prepared. It also reduces the length of briefing you need to give. Other actions you should take to reduce risk are covered below.

You are insured for negligence and any claims against you or the club for any incidents arising. The insurance does NOT cover injuries members may sustain that are their own fault – it is not personal accident insurance. You can view the club’s insurance policy on its web site.

2. Before the walk

If you have not led a walk before, there are experienced members who are happy to assist. Ask a committee member to put you in touch with one of them.

Choose the route

- Consider the likely ability and fitness of the group and the season and terrain. Consider what the grade will be and the time of year most appropriate for the walk.
- Choose a route within your own capabilities to lead. You can use routes from books, magazines, the club web site or off the internet, or make up your own route from maps.
- Plan to start your route where there is safe and adequate provision for several cars to park. If there are toilets nearby then include this in the notice to be sent to members.
- Consider whether there is a cafe or pub that members can visit after (or during) the walk. Do as much, or as little, as you wish to allow people to make use of it.
- Make use of public rights of way, permissive ways and access land. Good tracks may be more suitable than footpaths when it is wet. Limit the amount of walking on roads.
- Plan options to shorten the route if necessary and for alternative walks in bad weather.
- Note where there would be the easiest access to and from the route in an emergency.

Recce the Walk

- It is essential to recce your walk to check it is viable and to ensure you can find the way. A second person is good company and can be back-marker on the walk.
- Note any unusual difficulties and risks not covered by the generic risk assessment (section 8). If there are any, you should record how you plan to deal with them.
- Identify interesting features and potential places for breaks and lunch.
- Please report any obstacles on the route or broken stiles to the appropriate local authority giving the exact location and a photograph if possible. See the club web site.

Admin and preparation

- Send information on the walk and starting point to the Programme Secretary in the usual format. Include more information in the difficulty of the walk for mountain walks.
- The club will either top up your own first aid kit to meet the contents list below (section 5), or give you one to keep. A mapping app on your mobile phone, or a GPS, may be helpful. The club has 4 walkie-talkies that you can arrange to use.
- You can claim mileage expenses at the current club rate when you recce your walk: download the claim form from the club web site. Please submit claim forms promptly.

3. The day before the walk

- Check the weather forecast (www.metoffice.gov.uk or www.mwis.org.uk) and rainfall radar (www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/observation/map/#?map=Rainfall). Be prepared to make alterations to the route, or even cancel the walk, and advise the Programme Secretary (or another committee member) if you do so.
- Pack maps, compass, first-aid kit and mobile phone (and GPS / walkie talkies if needed).
- Emergency services are on 999 or 112. See section 7 on registering your mobile phone.
- Make sure that someone will be able give grid references, what3words references or post codes to the emergency services. <https://gridreferencefinder.com/os.php> may be helpful.
- Arrange for someone to be prepared to answer any queries from members by phone.

4. On the day

Meeting at the start of the walk

- Arrive early and check people can park safely. Welcome those arriving, particularly newcomers. You can refuse to take anyone whom you consider to be inadequately equipped or for any other reason that you consider may affect the walk. No dogs are allowed.
- Be prepared for anyone to tell you, in private, of any medical conditions or medication.
- Keep the briefing short. Introduce any new walkers. Mention interesting features, the total distance to be walked and point out any hazards.
- Remind people of the “Guidance for Members” document. **Stress that we expect anyone who gets separated from the group to return to the last point where they were with the group and WAIT.** Send someone back to find them if this occurs.
- Count the number of people in the group.
- Brief a back-marker, who should have a whistle and, if appropriate, a route map and walkie talkie.

On the walk

- Set a pace to suit the capabilities of the group and the grade of the walk. Keep an eye on the slowest walkers and stay in touch with your back-marker, waiting as necessary.
- Manage the group when passing along or crossing roads and when crossing stiles. Only cross streams where it is safe to do so – change the route if water levels are high.
- Keep the group together, especially if visibility is reduced: nobody should be out of sight.
- Keep to the Country Code. Endeavour to cause minimum damage to crops, passing through cultivation in single file, when appropriate. Give cattle a wide berth.
- Ensure that walkers pressing ahead know to stay in contact, and to wait whenever there is a choice of route. Allow everyone to catch-up and recover, especially after ascents.
- Be alert to everyone’s welfare, allow time to alter clothing and for comfort stops as well as for food and drink breaks.
- Should someone become unwell, then two people should stay with the person or accompany them back to an appropriate safe place. Take a short route to a road if necessary.

End of and after the walk

- Check the headcount and thank everyone for attending.
- Return the club walkie talkies if you have used them.
- In the unlikely event that an accident has occurred on the walk, obtain an Incident Report Form from a committee member or the web site, complete it, and send it to the secretary.

5. Changes to or cancellation of walks

If changes need to be made to a walk or it has to be cancelled, you should inform the walk programme secretary (or another committee member) who will:

- Decide, with the walk leader, if another walk leader is able to take over the walk.
- Notify all members by email of the change or cancellation.
- Endeavour to arrange for a notice to be put on the website and on Facebook.

6. First aid kits

You may already have a first aid kit for walking. If you do, the club will top it up to match the contents list below. If you are leading a walk and don't have a first aid kit then the club will give you one. If you stop leading walks and no longer need it, then please return it.

Contents	BWC minimum	Contents	BWC minimum
Contents list	1	Microporous tape	1
First aid guidance leaflet	1	Nitrile or vinyl gloves - pairs	1
Sterile cleansing wipes	4	Tweezers	1
Triangular bandage	1	Scissors	1
Crepe Bandage 5cm x 4.5m	1	Safety pins	6
Conforming bandage 5cm x 4.5m	1	Foil blanket	1
Cohesive bandage 5cm x 4.5m	Optional	Sterile eyewash 20ml	1
Open Woven bandage 5cm x 4.5m	Optional	Burn dressing or gel sachet	1
Adhesive, low adherent dressing > 5 x 5 cm	2	Antihistamine cream or tablets	1
Low Adherent Dressing > 5 x 5cm	1	Resuscitation face shield	Optional
Low Adherent Dressing > 10 x 10cm	1	Fluorescent jacket (separate)	Optional
Waterproof plasters	10	Whistle (separate)	1
Blister plasters	2		

7. Registering your mobile phone with the emergency services

We encourage you to register your mobile phone for the emergency text service. In an emergency, if there is a poor mobile signal, you may still be able to send a text to 999. The service required, nature of the incident and an accurate location must be given. To register:

- Text the word 'register' to 999. You will receive some texts about the service.
- After reading these, reply by texting 'yes' to 999. You will receive a text confirming the registration (or detailing any problems).
- At any time, you can check your mobile phone is registered by texting the word 'register' to 999. You will receive a text giving the status.

8. Generic Risk Assessment / Control Measures

Hazard	C 1-5	L 1-5	CxL 1-25	Controls	Gf WL	Gf M
General controls	N/A	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid kit, whistles and walkie-talkies. Mobile phone, with mapping app / OSlocate. Insurance and declaration. Identify potential hazards during recce. Avoid, repair and/or advise. "Guidance for Members" and "Guidance for Walk Leaders" documents. 	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓
Trip / fall > abrasions, minor cuts	2	4	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants to wear appropriate footwear and clothing. 		✓
Trip / fall > broken bones / immobile	5	2	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note any access to roads. Contact emergency services. Register mobiles. Have OSlocate app or equivalent on mobile. "How to fall" in "Guidance for Members". 	✓ ✓	✓
Released branch whips into an eye	4	2	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include in "Guidance for Members". 		✓
Traffic	2 5	3 1	6 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chose a safe parking location. Parking assistants / hi-vis jackets (available to walk leaders) if necessary. Plan for road crossings and stretches of road. 	✓ ✓ ✓	
Fail to follow planned route	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recce route. Maps and compass. Have mobile with mapping app or GPS. 	✓ ✓ ✓	
Lost participant	1 4	3 1	3 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Count participants out and back. Have a back-marker. Tell participants to go to where they were last with the group and wait. 	✓ ✓ ✓	✓
Unexpected illness	5	2	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants may advise of any health problems and medications OR carry medical card. Note any access to roads. 	✓ ✓	✓
Exhausted participant	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform participants of the length of the walk, total ascent, number of stiles etc. Plan short cuts / routes to roads. 	✓ ✓	
Deterioration in weather	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check weather forecast, including rainfall radar. Plan an alternative route. 	✓ ✓	
Heat stroke / sun burn	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear sun cream and sun hats. Carry sufficient fluids. 		✓ ✓
Hypothermia	5	1	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All to wear appropriate clothing. Emergency blanket in first aid kit. 		✓
Stings or bites	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cream or antihistamine tablets in first aid kit. 		
Ticks > Lyme's disease	4	1	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise participants to check for ticks and provide info. on Lyme's disease. 		✓
Cattle and bulls	3	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep together and stay wide of cattle. No dogs on walks. 	✓	✓
Drowning / floods	5	1	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only cross in safe places – divert if levels high. 		✓

C = consequence

L = likelihood

GfWL = Guidance for Walk leaders

GfM = Guidance for Members