

Guidelines for Walk Leaders

Personal Skills

- Walk Leaders should only agree to lead a walk for which they have the required fitness, hill walking experience and navigation skills.
- Leaders should keep their navigation and map/compass skills up to date. As a backup, the ability to use a hand-held GPS unit or a Mobile Phone Navigation App (e.g. Viewranger) is advisable.
- The Committee will prioritise places for Walk Leaders on Mountain Skills and Remote Emergency Care (First Aid) training courses.

Preparation

- Agree the date and location of the walk with the Walk Co-ordinator.
- Select, plan and recce the walk including a shorter/escape route for use in bad weather or in an emergency.
- Forward the walk details to the Walk Co-Ordinator for inclusion on the Walk Schedule on the Club Website. The details should include location, description of route/hill(s), estimated distance and duration, maximum height and accumulated height.
- Agree and arrange for the booking and payment method for any bus/minibus hire, in advance, with the Walk Co-Ordinator.
- All walks should be planned to arrive at the finish point at least two hours before darkness.
- Walk Leaders should try to minimise walking on public roads, particularly on routes which carry heavy traffic flows.
- The Leader should ensure that when the group is walking on public roads, they do so in groups of less than 20, on the right hand side of the road. There should be adequate space between groups to facilitate the passage of vehicles.
- When there are a large number in the group (25 for hillwalks or 35/40 for Rambles/Short Walks), the walk leader should consider splitting the walk into two groups or use a Mid Leader as well as Sweeper without splitting the group.

At the meeting point on the day:

- Ensure that all walkers and visitors sign the Walk Book. The minimum number of participants on any club walk shall be 5.

- Organise the Car pooling/ Bus arrangements for the day. Collect and distribute any Car Pooling monies.
- In an effort to respect the environment and landowners, minimise the number of vehicles travelling to the start location.

At start point of walk

- The Walk Leader should organise the parking of cars to avoid obstructing vehicle access for locals/farmers.
- Advise the walking group of predicted weather, wind and ground conditions for the day, including estimated wind speed and temperature at the summit.
- Exchange mobile phone numbers and agreed communication signals with the Walk Sweeper.

During the walk:

- The Leader shall set the pace for the walk, to suit the route and the main group of walkers on the day.
- Encourage and facilitate any interest shown by walkers in OS maps and landscape features on the walk.
- Arrange breaks at the far side of any stiles/gates, when starting to go off road, after crossing a stream/river, at the end of a strong ascent (including the summit), etc.
- During the walk, the Leader may extend or curtail a route in response to weather/wind conditions, the pace of the group, the onset of darkness, etc.
- Walk leaders should not be reluctant to seek the opinions and assistance of fellow walkers and walk leaders during a walk, or in difficult navigation situations.
- During the walk, the Walk Leader should periodically carry out a head count of the group numbers.
- If it is necessary during any walk to facilitate the return of any walker(s) to the start/finish, the Walk Leader should normally arrange for 3 experienced and competent walkers to accompany the returnee(s). Telephone contact should be made with the Walk Leader when the party has arrived safely at their destination.
- In the case of any medical or accident emergency, the Walk Leader should check if any of their fellow walkers have completed REC first aid training and seek their assistance and guidance. Mountain Rescue (999 or 112) can be called for assistance, to put them on standby, or for advice.
- In poor visibility, the Leader should ensure that the group walks in close formation and uses whistles and high viz vests to maintain audible and visible contact with each other.

At end of walk:

- Record any incident/accident on sign-in book and inform the Walk Co-Ordinator.
- No Walk Leader should leave the finish point until the last walker has finished and is accounted for.