

COVID-19 Code of Practice: 26th October 2022

With some simple policies, procedures and protocols then we can all continue to enjoy the Great Outdoors whilst minimising the risk of transmitting infectious diseases, including Covid-19. Valley, hill and mountain walking are extremely healthy activities, with plenty of space and fresh air to enjoy the beautiful landscapes. **Our priority is your safety, enjoyment and satisfaction.**



STATEMENT OF PARTICIPATION

To prevent the spread of infectious diseases, such as Covid-19, please do not attend if...

- You have had a positive Covid-19 test in the previous 10 days, and are still testing positive after Day 5.
- You have any Covid-19 symptoms (including generally feeling unwell, fatigue, sore throat, cough, fever, headache, loss of or change in your sense of taste or smell).

I must make you aware that there is still a low risk of transmission of an infectious disease, such as Covid-19, when taking part in one of our walking activities, which I cannot eliminate. You are aware of and accept this risk.

It is your responsibility to check Government Guidance and comply with any restrictions where you live.



COVID-19 OPERATING PROCEDURES

Additional Operating Procedures specific for Infectious Diseases (including COVID-19).
This to be used in conjunction and alongside our current Operating Procedures and Risk Assessments.

- A Consent Form must be signed by everyone taking part.
- Our Terms & Conditions include our Infectious Diseases (including Covid-19) policy.

PRE-WALK - Send 'Final Walk Summary' email to participants

- Include as much information as possible in the 'Final Email' to reduce briefing time in the morning of our walk, including weather forecast, kit list, possible routes etc. This to be done online via email information, website links, video tutorials or Zoom briefings (if appropriate).
- Ensure all participants have received the Confirmation Email and Final Walk Summary email, as well as the Infectious Diseases (including Covid-19) declaration (within our Terms & Conditions)
- It is essential that all participants complete and return a Consent Form prior to the course/walk

MORNING OF WALK / CAR PARK

- Verbally ask everyone if they are physically well and symptom free. Summarise the pre-course briefing information, to ensure everyone has read and understood it (weather, kit, route etc)



COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT - Guided valley, hill and mountain walking in the British Isles

This Infectious Diseases (including Covid-19) Risk Assessment is an additional Risk Assessment that complements and enhances our Generic Risk Assessment. This Infectious Diseases (including Covid-19) Risk Assessment must be read and used in conjunction with TeamWalking's Generic Risk Assessment and Operating Procedures.

This Risk Assessment, and associated Operating Procedures and Code of Practice, takes into account that there are three variables of transmission.

- **Droplet transmission and aerosol generation:** The risk associated with each action during the activity, based on duration and proximity of participants.
- **Fomite transmission:** The risk associated with the handling and transfer of equipment during the activity
- **Population:** The number of participants likely to take part in the activity plus known risk factors of participants with underlying health conditions or high-risk groups, who wish to participate.

20/04/22 - Legal restrictions to control COVID-19 have now been lifted in England. Covid-19 remains a threat to health, so our key Covid-19 mitigation measures remain in place.



RISK

Health declaration / symptoms / Government

WHO - Participants, Instructors | LIKELIHOOD - Low | CONSEQUENCE - Medium

CONTROL MEASURES

- *Pre-walk Statement of Participation (Terms & Conditions, plus pre-walk email) that participants must not attend if they have tested positive for Covid-19 within the previous 10 days (and still testing positive after Day 5) and/or have Covid-19 symptoms.*
- *Participant Declaration on the morning of the walk that they are in good health and symptom free & have not had a positive Covid-19 test within the previous 10 days (and still testing positive after Day 5). Covid-19 symptoms include generally feeling unwell, fatigue, sore throat, cough, fever, headache, loss of or change in your sense of taste or smell. If this applies to any participant then they will be asked to leave and re-book on another date.*
- *If a participant begins to display symptoms whilst on the walk, then they must maintain social distancing of 2 metres or more from other group members, and observe good personal hygiene, until the walk has finished.*
- *If the Walk Leader develops symptoms, then the Walk Leader will postpone any walks (or find a replacement Walk Leader) until they have either had a negative Covid-19 PCR test or completed a minimum of 5 days self-isolation and are symptom free and physically well.*
- **Adaptive to change** - *The Walk Leader to regularly keep informed of the latest Government advice and be prepared to adapt to change at very short notice. Any changes that affect the delivery of guided walks, group sizes, local lockdowns, illness, health guidance etc must be taken into account and acted upon straight away, by informing participants of the changes and briefing them accordingly. This Risk Assessment will be regularly updated with the latest Government advice.*

RISK

Consent Forms - Known risk factors of participants with underlying health conditions or high-risk groups

WHO - Participants, Instructors | LIKELIHOOD - Low | CONSEQUENCE - High

CONTROL MEASURES

- *Consent Forms completed by all participants, which highlights age, gender and health conditions.*
- *Our events are open for people to freely choose to attend - it is a personal choice; participants make their own decisions whether they wish to attend. There will never be any obligation or pressure to attend. Refunds, free transfers or credits notes are always available.*
- *Our Terms & Conditions makes it clear that we mitigate risks of transmission, however, there remains a low level of risk of virus transmission, which we cannot eliminate.*

RISK

Lateral Flow Tests - Multi-day walks and specific day walks

WHO - Participants, Instructors | LIKELIHOOD - Medium | CONSEQUENCE - High

CONTROL MEASURES

- *We may ask participants of multi-day walks and some specific day walks to take a Lateral Flow Test (LFT) in consideration of their fellow walkers, if they have access to a LFT test kit. This is because a percentage of Covid-19 cases are asymptomatic and you can still catch Covid-19 after having had two vaccinations. This will be optional for participants to do, as participants may not have access to a test kit, LFT tests are no longer freely available (they must be purchased) and often do not show a positive result until the person is already infectious. Therefore, the benefits of using LFT is limited. This policy will be kept under review.*

RISK

Virus transmission in the outdoors

WHO - Participants, Instructors | LIKELIHOOD - Low | CONSEQUENCE - Medium

CONTROL MEASURES

With some simple policies, procedures and protocols then we can all continue to enjoy the Great Outdoors whilst minimising the risk of transmitting infectious diseases, including Covid-19. Valley, hill and mountain walking are healthy activities, with plenty of space and fresh air to enjoy the beautiful landscapes. The risk of transmitting Covid-19 is much lower outdoors than indoors.

- *Our courses and walks are all outdoors, with plenty of space and fresh air.*
- *Indoor activities and/or socialising is optional and a personal choice*
- *Meeting Points, pre-walk group briefings etc will be outdoors in carefully selected locations, such as National Park car parks with toilets facilities and a safe area to meet. Walk Leader to ensure that the briefing area does not block Rights of Way or pavements, and does not involve standing in a road. If the weather is poor (wet, windy, cold etc) then the Walk Leader may decide to move into a nearby cafe or pub for shelter and refreshments, if available; the Walk Leader must check that all participants are symptom free and physically well before moving indoors, and all participants must agree and consent to moving indoors. This consent can be given verbally.*
- *During the walk, briefings, discussions or rest stops during the walk with the group will be in a circle, crescent or a straight line; this will depend on the location, weather conditions, wind direction, group size and what is being briefed. Briefings with individual participants will be side-by side wherever possible. The Walk Leader must take weather conditions into account; this is important so that people can hear and understand instructions from the Walk Leader.*
- *Food Breaks / Lunch - always find a sheltered place. Remind participants to use hand sanitiser before eating. In poor weather conditions, then the Walk Leader will manage shorter but more regular food and drink breaks, to avoid people getting cold, or use group shelters (see below)*
- *Spotting (stiles, rock steps, scrambling etc) - Narrow, technical and steep ground is an integral part of mountain walking (see separate assessment with regards to steep ground and Grade 1 scrambles). When crossing large/*

awkward/broken stiles and/or rock steps that require spotting, the Walk Leader will first of all demonstrate good practice and safe crossing techniques. After demonstration, if the Walk Leader feels it important to 'spot' participants to avoid a slip or fall, then the Walk Leader will explain what they will be doing - the Walk Leader stand close behind the participant with arms outstretched to prevent a slip becoming a fall (spotting). This will be for just a few moments whilst the participant crosses the stile or climbs the rock step.

- Some specific outdoor mountain activities have situations where close contact, at key moments when the activity is being undertaken, is unavoidable. These generally involve the participants undertaking a process that is essential to the safe conduct of the activity or dealing with an unforeseen safety critical event. The key mitigation measure is to foresee and avoid such events happening through route planning, checking weather forecasts, dynamic and adaptive route choice during the day and general group management. If close contact becomes necessary (spotting, emergency use of the rope, confidence roping etc) then contact to be kept as brief and dynamic as safely possible. If participants are spotting each other, then the Walk Leader will implement 'contact training' to familiarise participants with the specific 'close contact' guidelines before undertaking the activity.

RISK

Virus transmission in the outdoors - pushing beyond abilities, experience or fitness.

WHO - Participants, Instructors | LIKELIHOOD - Low | CONSEQUENCE - High

CONTROL MEASURES

- The Walk Leader will endeavour to be self-reliant as much as possible, and undertake walks and choose venues that they know and that are within the limits and capabilities of the group as much as possible, whilst also acknowledging that risk is an inherent part of outdoor activities and is often part of the attraction, particularly in a guided group under the instruction of an experienced Mountain Leader. The Walk Leader will avoid being too goal orientated. Mountain Rescue help may be slower to respond with reduced capability if we get into any difficulties.
- The Walk Leader must pay particular attention to the weather forecast and prevailing weather conditions, and take this information into account when planning routes as well as dynamic route choice on the walk. The route choice will be dependent on the purpose of the walk, experience and fitness of participants, time available, weather forecast plus other dynamic considerations.
- Dynamic & flexible group management by the Walk Leader is key. Monitor the group throughout the day & change plans accordingly. Consider easier options if available, but this must be weighed against purpose and group experience.
- This approach is a normal part of any guided walk under the instruction of a Walk Leader.

RISK

Virus transmission in indoor spaces - pubs, cafes, public toilets, group shelters

WHO - Participants, Instructors | LIKELIHOOD - Low | CONSEQUENCE - MEDIUM

CONTROL MEASURES

- All of our events are outdoors in the open air. Generally, we will meet outdoors in a large public car park, parking area or village centre.
- Much of our pre-walk briefings and learning will take place online before the walk, or briefed outdoors when we meet in the morning. For Navigation Courses, this will also include detailed tutorial videos that will significantly increase the amount of teaching done online and so reduce the need for as much teaching (and discussions) on the day of the course, which will mean that the outdoor day will be more practically focussed with an emphasis on practicing and consolidating skills whilst walking.
- During the walk, if participants wish to have refreshments indoors at a cafe, pub or shop, then this is a personal choice for each person to make. It is important that participants remain hydrated during the physical activity. A decision must be made by the Walk Leader whether it is reasonable and/or prudent to use cafes or shops during the walk; this decision will depend upon weather conditions, whether participants are dehydrated or tired, distance/time/physical nature of the walk left to complete, and also how busy the cafe/shop is, ventilation indoors, group size and each individual's choice.
- When we organise indoor social activities, such as meals, quizzes or socialising after a course, then these will always be optional for people to attend.
- If the weather is poor (wet, windy, cold etc) during the pre-walk Briefing then the Walk Leader may decide to move into a nearby cafe or pub for shelter and refreshments, if available; the Walk Leader must check that all participants are symptom free and physically well before moving indoors, and all participants must agree and consent to moving indoors. This consent can be given verbally.
- Participants will be asked to bring their own Survival Bag or small Group Shelter if they have one. In the event that some participants do not have a Survival Bag, then the Walk Leader will provide spare Survival Bags for people to use in an emergency situation, if the Walk Leader deems it necessary (e.g. mountains walks or bad weather forecast). The Walk Leader will also carry a Group Shelter that is large enough to accommodate the entire group, which may be used in poor weather conditions, if someone is cold/hypothermic, an emergency First Aid situation or someone does not have their own suitable shelter. All participants must agree and consent to being inside a Group Shelter with other people, unless in an emergency situation. Face coverings (such as a 'buff') are recommended within the Group Shelter, unless eating.

RISK

Virus transmission in the outdoors - Shared clothing, equipment, printed material etc

WHO - Participants, Instructors | LIKELIHOOD - low | CONSEQUENCE - Medium

CONTROL MEASURES

Outdoor Clothing, Kit & Equipment

- **Clothing and kit** - All participants asked to bring their own outdoor clothing and kit, if they have it. However, we will provide outdoor clothing and kit if required, as the provision of PPE such as waterproof clothing is necessary to ensure everyone is appropriately equipped for their chosen activity. This is important as the risks of coldness, discomfort, hypothermia etc are a significant risk in the outdoors and must be mitigated against.
- **Camping Equipment** - all participants asked to provide all of their own sleeping bag. We will provide camping equipment such as tents, rucksacks, sleep-mats, stoves, gas and dry-bag if required, as such kit is deemed to be PPE, e.g. a suitable backpacking tent.
- **Emergency Clothing** - the Walk Leader will carry in their rucksack some spare warm clothing for emergency situations (hypothermia).
- **Emergency Equipment - confidence rope & helmets** - the Walk Leader will carry emergency equipment as required, such as a confidence rope in the mountains, or give out helmets for Grade 1 scrambles and steep technical ground.
- **Survival Bags / Shelters** - Participants will be asked to bring their own Survival Bag or Group Shelter if they have one. In the event that participants do not have a Survival Bag, then the Walk Leader will bring spare Survival Bags, as well as a Group Shelter large enough for the entire group (see below). These will be carried by the Walk Leader.
- **Handling Printed material** - All printed material, such as course notes and marketing material, will now be sent as a PDF by email after the course.
- **Cleaning** - all equipment, clothing or kit that is loaned out will be given out at the beginning of the day and will remain in the participant's possession until the end of the walk. At the end of the day, the equipment, clothing or kit will be cleaned by washing, disinfectant spray or airing outside. Tents will be given a minimum of 3 days in between uses. Walk Leader to check all reusable PPE equipment after cleaning and drying to ensure it is still in good working order.

RISK

Virus transmission in the outdoors - First Aid & Emergency Procedures

WHO - Participants, Instructors, Public | LIKELIHOOD - Low | CONSEQUENCE - High

CONTROL MEASURES

- The priority for the Walk Leader is themselves and their group. When dealing with members of the general public in distress then the Walk Leader will provide verbal help, advice and incident management as much as possible so that the member of public (and their walking companions if they have any) can assist themselves, and to use their clothing, kit and equipment if they have it. The Walk Leader will only provide First Aid assistance to a member of the public if it is a serious or life-threatening situation, and only if it is deemed safe to provide assistance. The Walk Leader must consider the situation very carefully, as if they provide emergency assistance to a member of the public then this may contaminate their PPE (e.g. blood), which then cannot be used for their group.
- Most First Aid is for minor injuries such as cuts, grazes, aching muscles etc. To minimise the risk of contact, then all participants will be asked to bring their own small personal First Aid kit, with antiseptic wipes, plasters, pain-killers, anti-inflammatories and antihistamines as well as any personal medications they may require. This will allow them to self administer minor First Aid.
- Participants will be asked to bring their own Survival Bag or small Group Shelter if they have one. In the event that some participants do not have a Survival Bag, then the Walk Leader can provide spare Survival Bags for people to use in an emergency situation, if the Walk Leader deems it necessary (e.g. mountains walks or bad weather forecast).
- The Walk Leader will also carry a Group Shelter that is large enough to accommodate the entire group (8-12 person), which will be used in poor weather conditions, if someone is cold/hypothermic, an emergency First Aid situation or someone does not have a suitable shelter. Face coverings recommended within the Group Shelter.

RISK

Virus transmission in the outdoors - Overnight Stays: Wild Camping, Backpacking and Valley Camping

WHO - Participants, Instructors, Public | LIKELIHOOD - Low | CONSEQUENCE - Medium

CONTROL MEASURES

- **Tents** - the only overnights stays TeamWalking organises are camping trips, either wild camping or backpacking in valley campsites. Each participant will have their own individual tent, unless sharing with a member of their household, family member or friend (who they have travelled with, for example).
- **Camping Equipment** - All participants asked to provide all of their own sleeping bags, mugs and spoons. We will continue to provide tents, rucksacks, sleep-mats, stoves, gas and dry-bags, as these are essential items of kit (PPE).
- **Bothies** - bothies are not intended for organised groups. However, in the Lake District or Scotland we may camp outside a bothy & use the bothy as somewhere warm and dry to spend the evening for cooking, shelter etc. The Walk Leader will make a decision whether we use the bothy depending on: other users, group size & needs, weather conditions, ventilation, size of bothy, personal choice etc. We will camp outside the bothy, unless people make an individual choice to stay inside. It is each person's decision whether they use the bothy. Bothies will not be relied upon for sleeping on a Wild Camping trip; we will always carry tents with the intention of using them.

- **Emergency Shelters** - as each person is carrying their own tent and sleeping bag, then there is no need for the Walk Leader to carry individual survival bags or a group shelter.
- We operate a strict 'Leave No Trace' policy - everything we bring with us is taken back out by us.

RISK

Adherence of this Risk Assessment

WHO - Participants, Instructors | LIKELIHOOD - Medium | CONSEQUENCE - Medium

CONTROL MEASURES

- Walk Leader to regularly read through this Risk Assessment
- Walk Leader to demonstrate good practice throughout the day.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- Walk Leader to discuss with the participant:
 - a) accessibility needs with regards to hygiene, physical distancing, face coverings etc
 - b) what functional support may be required, and the implications for physical distancing
 - c) Reasonable actions will be taken to mitigate the risks and accommodate people with disabilities, whilst also taking into account the health and safety of all participants taking part. The Walk Leader will produce a specific risk assessment for the event, with appropriate mitigating actions.

This Risk Assessment is very dynamic, and requires the Walk Leader to be very adaptive to change at short notice.

Risk Assessment originally prepared by Mark Reid: **12th June 2020**

Updated: **6th, 21st, 30th July; 27th August; 12th, 20th & 25th September 2020**

26th March, 13th May, 1st August, 1st September & 1st December 2021

20th April 2022 & 26th October 2022

This information will be updated as and when necessary to adhere to current Government advice.

Mark Reid is responsible for overseeing compliance