



GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT

Guided valley, hill and mountain walking in the British Isles

This Generic Risk Assessment forms the key risk assessment document for all activities undertaken by TeamWalking and its Freelance Instructors, and must be read and used in conjunction with TeamWalking's Operating Procedures. It is essential that this is read through fully before any activity, and then a Specific Risk Assessment (including Site Specific Assessment) produced for that particular activity and location (if required) in conjunction with participant/group information, aims, route plan, weather conditions etc; this will then highlight the specific risks that must be managed and/or briefed to the group prior to the activity. **A Route Plan* MUST always be carried out.**

** A 'Route Plan' may vary from a discussion between Walk Leaders to an 'overview map' to a more formal written Route Plan. Route Plans must be viewed ONLY as guide, and the actual walk must be flexible and dynamic to take into account the group's needs, weather conditions, terrain, ability, fitness etc. See Operating Procedures for more details.*

When considering risk, it is important to note:

- **Who may be harmed** - participants, instructors, public
- **Likelihood of occurrence/incident/injury** - low, medium, high*
- **Consequences of the risk of incident/injury** - low, medium, high*
- **Control and Action Points** - briefing, knowledge/education, giving responsibility, personal safety and/or protective equipment, training and practice
- **Review and reflection** - after each walk, then update the Risk Assessment and Operating Procedures as appropriate.

The risk of injury **MUST** be balanced against the nature of the activity, as hill and mountain walking involves a recognised level of unavoidable risk, that often forms part of the attraction of the activity. It must also be balanced against the benefits of learning and experience that comes from challenging terrain and conditions. All Walk Leaders must consider their responsibilities with respect to their **Duty of Care**.

** Low, medium, high (likelihood) - low means extremely rarely, perhaps no more than once a year. High means frequently occurs on most walks, such as slips, trips and falls.*

** Low, medium, high (consequence) - low means minor incident/injury that requires no or minimal treatment or intervention; high means First Aid, Mountain Rescue, hospital and/or serious injury.*



PRIOR

Planning, research, training, knowledge of group, area, terrain and conditions

DURING

Terrain, weather conditions, group dynamics.

Managed by route finding/navigation, flexibility, dynamic approach, group management, wearing/carrying correct equipment and clothing, education, information, briefing, informed decisions.

THREE TYPES OF KEY RISK

HUMAN - managed through communication, planning, briefing.

LANDSCAPE/TERRAIN - route planning, navigation, briefing, training, education, avoidance

TIMING/WEATHER - planning, weather forecast, fitness levels

RISK

Briefing of the group - misunderstood or misinterpreted instructions during the Activity Safety Briefing or during the activity (*including coaching, teaching, guidance, warnings and advice relating to walking activities*).

WHO - Participants | **LIKELIHOOD** - Low | **CONSEQUENCE** - Medium

CONTROL MEASURES

- Choose a location that is safe and away from distractions; ensure all participants have finished their pre-walk preparations.
- Brief the group in a semi-circle, and ensure a positive physical positioning within the group
- Assert control so the group are certain that the Mountain Leader is in charge
- Know your group - first names, fitness levels, medical history, aims etc
- Always go through the Activity Safety Briefing prior to the commencement of the activity, and brief the relevant information for the day.
- Clear and concise instructions
- Check understanding of instructions through questioning, especially where the instructions relate to safety
- Always keep the participants as fully engaged and informed as possible throughout the activity.
- Hill and Mountain Walking, by its nature, involves an element of risk and such risks must be accepted by the participants. Ensure that the participants are made aware of potential risks involved with the activity.
- During the group briefing ALWAYS check if there have been any recent changes to the personal information provided on participant's Booking Forms, even if they have completed the forms recently. In particular, recent illnesses, changes to medical information etc. Ask participants to inform the Walk Leader quietly and confidentially prior to setting off on the walk.
- Ensure all participants speak English; if they don't then the Walk Leader must ensure that there is a fluent English speaker with them who can translate the information. This is a very rare occurrence and relates only to walks such as the Coast to Coast with participants from overseas.
- If any participant has hearing loss then ensure the Walk Leader discusses with them how best to communicate with them; the Walk Leader must ensure that they are standing close to them so that the participant can lip-read, and ensure the Walk Leader's mouth is free from obstruction, such as a Buff or jacket collar. Ensure understanding before proceeding.

RISK

All participants have correct clothing, equipment and gear

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- What to wear and bring is highlighted on Kit List form in detail.
- All participants must complete a Consent Form, indicating what items of clothing or equipment they wish to borrow.
- Walk Leader to have a 'gear check' before the walk to ensure participants are wearing/carrying all of the necessary clothing and equipment. Often participants say they have everything, when often they don't (particularly with regards to waterproof trousers and water), so if conditions are poor then it will be necessary to check each person's rucksack.
- Walk Leader to always bring spare waterproofs and outdoor clothing in a spare rucksack - jacket, trousers, gloves. Amount will vary according to the size of the group and weather forecast.
- The Walk Leader reserves the right to refuse to take a participant whom they consider is wearing unsuitable clothing and/or footwear.

RISK

All participants have suitable footwear - walking boots / trail shoes

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- TeamWalking requires all participants to wear suitable outdoor footwear; these must be walking boots, with sturdy soles, good tread, ankle support and waterproof. This is highlighted on the Kit List and Terms & Conditions. TeamWalking provides walking boots if required.
- Walk Leader to have a 'gear check' before the walk to ensure participants are wearing suitable footwear. The Walk Leader reserves the right to refuse to take a participant whom they consider is wearing unsuitable footwear.
- TeamWalking recognises that some people prefer to wear trail shoes (outdoor shoes without ankle support but with grip and often waterproof). This type of footwear may be suitable for certain routes with reasonable or good terrain and clear paths. If a participant arrives at the event wearing trail shoes then the Walk Leader may offer them a pair of walking boots to wear (if the Walk Leader has spare boots available). If the walk is lower level, easier hill, moorland or mountain routes with good terrain and clear paths, and the participant insists on wearing their own trail shoes footwear, then the Walk Leader will inform the participant of the following statement: **"Common incidents outdoors are slips, trips and falls. The vast majority of these incidents are minor, however, there is a risk of a significant ankle inversion injury (sprain or break) caused by the slip, trip or fall. Wearing walking boots with ankle support significantly reduces this risk, and is therefore highlighted in our Risk Assessments as a mitigating measure. There are sections of rough terrain, rocks, stiles, mud, wet ground etc along the way which present a risk of a slip, trip or fall. We consider wearing footwear other than walking boots to be an unwise choice. If you choose to walk in trail shoes against our advice to wear boots with ankle support, then we can not accept any liability whatsoever for any potentially preventable ankle injury. Do you accept this risk?"** The decision to accept a participant onto a walk who is wearing trail shoes is at the discretion of the Walk Leader, and the Walk Leader must be satisfied that the participant has sufficient knowledge, experience, ability and skill walking in trail shoes on similar terrain to the walk they have booked to do, plus the walking route is suitable for the participant; this will mean that the Walk Leader has prior knowledge of the route, terrain, hazards, vegetation etc plus has considered weather conditions. The participant **MUST** accept this risk by either verbally accepting the risk or signing the Footwear Disclaimer form.
- Walking boots **MUST** be worn on all other types of walks, notably hill, moorland and mountain routes with rough terrain, such as scrambling, boulder fields, scree, rocky terrain etc. If a participant arrives at the event wearing trail shoes and it is a hill, moorland or mountain walk with rough and/or technical terrain then they will not be permitted to participate unless they are wearing walking boots - **ONLY** walking boots will be accepted as suitable footwear on these type of walks.
- Flat-soled trainers or shoes that are not intended for outdoor terrain are not permitted on any walks.

RISK

Fitness levels

WHO - Participants | LIKELIHOOD - Medium | CONSEQUENCE - Medium

CONTROL MEASURES

- Participants must complete a Consent Form, which indicates fitness levels, regular exercise and medical conditions.
- All activities are based on a reasonable level of fitness, as stated in the Terms and Conditions.
- All participants are advised as to the type of activity they will be undertaking.
- The Walk Leader must make a quick assessment when they first meet the group in the morning, taking into account what individuals are wearing, their physical fitness, appearance, hiking experience etc and then take this into account when deciding which routes to follow.

- Route plans and walks **MUST** be flexible and dynamic to take into account varying fitness and energy levels throughout the day, as well as weather/ground conditions, with planned 'escape routes' and options to shorten the route. Walk Leaders must **NOT** feel compelled to complete a planned route or reach a summit/objective if conditions (weather, ground, fitness, ability etc) are not favourable.
- The Walk Leader to observe and monitor individuals in the early part of the walk, to assess walking pace, balance and ability to deal with differing terrains. Wherever possible, have an easy 'walk in' for the first part of the walk on hill or mountainous days to allow this observation to take place.
- If it becomes apparent during the early stages of the walk that a participant may not be able to complete the planned route and/or it is unsafe for the participant to continue on the walk then a decision must be made early in the walk and the participant walked back to either the start of the walk or a safe location, such as a village, road, house etc.
- These are often difficult conversations, so it is imperative that the Walk Leader uses objective language concerning pace, movement skills, terrain, timings, observed fitness/health conditions, what the participant has said etc plus their observations of the initial part of the walk. The Walk Leader to emphasise that their focus is on the safety, enjoyment and health of everyone in the group. It is better to make these decisions early before anything happens rather than waiting until later when something has happened, which only leads to more difficulties managing these potentially foreseeable situations. This is where experience, training and knowledge comes in, as foresight rather than hindsight is key to making sound judgements and decisions. Listen to the 'alarm bells'.
- The Walk Leader reserves the right to refuse to take a participant whom they consider will be unable to complete the planned activity.

RISK

Weather history and forecast

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- Monitor MetOffice and MWIS forecast prior to the walk. Monitor river levels via the Environment Agency website, if appropriate.
- Plan a suitable route given the weather history and forecast; assess the weather conditions during the day, and change the route accordingly. Always plan walks with options to shorten the route or lower-level alternatives.
- Dynamic, flexible route choice throughout the day.
- Risks - wind, rain, cold, lightning, terrain, height, remote.
- Wind speeds of 30mph gusting 40mph is getting towards the limit of tolerance and enjoyment; care and caution must be exercised with wind forecasts over 40mph. A judgement must be made by the Walk Leader as to whether these conditions are suitable or viable, based on various factors such as the purpose of the day, individual and group experience, terrain and height, wind direction, time spent on exposed high ground, whether it is raining, windchill, potential shelter, escape routes etc; gusts of 40mph may be suitable for a Mountain Skills course but unsuitable for a group of novices on a guided mountain walk. A dynamic and adaptive approach must be made by the Walk Leader during the walk, and the Walk Leader must change the route if they determine the wind speed to be unsuitable for the group, terrain and purpose of the day.
- Mitigations may include: lower level routes, walk direction (wind behind participants), leeward side of slopes, avoiding exposed escarpments and slopes, avoiding summit knolls, dynamic assessment during the walk etc; lower level routes offer more 'friction' such as trees, buildings, walls etc that reduces wind speed.
- Winds of over 50mph are not suitable on high exposed hills, fells and mountains; consider route change, lower level options, sheltered slopes etc. The limit for exposed edges (Grade 1) is 30mph.
- In strong winds, be aware of falling debris from trees, buildings etc - make an assessment of the route ahead with regards to flying debris; change route if necessary.

- *Poor weather conditions coupled with challenging terrain has significant potential implications, notably hypothermia, exhaustion, high levels of discomfort, slow walking pace etc. These must be managed carefully, with dynamic and adaptive route choice as well as good group management.*
- *Walk Leader to carry Group Shelter sufficient in size for the total number of participants, emergency equipment, spare clothing and mobile phone*

RISK

Thunder storms, lightning

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- *Obtain a weather forecast. If thunder storms are forecast, use a low-level route with lots of escape routes/places of safety. Avoidance is the best course of action.*
- *Walk Leaders to use Lightning App as well as Weather Radar information in real time. The Lightning App gives live reporting of lightning strikes in the vicinity, and is very useful to see where the thunderstorms are and moving towards. These apps will help the Walk Leader make decisions.*
- *Be aware of cloud and weather conditions during the walk. If thunder storms are likely or imminent, seek shelter in a pub, cafe, house or car if possible.*
- *No where is safe outdoors - the only safe place to be is a car or house with plumbing/wiring.*
- *If caught outdoors, head to low ground, space out 20 metres apart and squat down with hands on knees and feet together, stood on rucksacks. Do NOT stand beside/beneath tall objects such as trees, crags, cliffs etc. Do NOT shelter in caves, barns or tents.*

RISK

Cold / Hypothermia (cold / wet weather)

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- *Be aware of the weather forecast.*
- *Ensure all participants are wearing/carrying correct kit & clothing, and spare clothing.*
- *Ensure all participants carry food and hot drink.*
- *Walk Leaders to carry spare clothing, spare gloves, hats, survival bag and group shelter as well as extra high energy food and/or energy gels.*
- *Walk Leader may consider carrying a stove for making warm drinks on cold days*
- *Monitor the group throughout the activity, with regular rest stops for food and drink, and to also check the physical and mental state of the participants through simple questioning and observation.*
- *Adjust the pace of the group if necessary, coupled with a flexible and dynamic route selection*
- *Prevention is key - in poor weather conditions, discuss symptoms of mild hypothermia so people are aware (shivering, cognitive decline etc) and ways to remedy this (extra layers, food, warm drink, lower ground). Important that participants feel able to discuss this with the Walk Leader.*

RISK

Heat stroke / dehydration (hot weather)

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- *Ensure all participants have plenty of water at the start of the walk.*
- *Ensure all participants drink water regularly (500ml per hour as a general guide).*
- *Plan the route to pass water stops (houses, villages, pubs etc) along the way so participants can re-fill water bottles. Walk Leader to carry water filter in the mountains.*
- *Discuss going to the toilet outdoors; every 2 - 3 hours as a guide for a pee. Discuss the colour of urine (very pale straw colour); the risks of heat-related problems far outweigh the embarrassment of going to the loo outdoors.*

- Ensure all have suitable sun hat, light & loose clothing and high factor sun cream. Advise participants to cover all exposed skin with clothing or suncream.
- Walk Leaders to carry spare sun protection clothing (hats and sun-cream), as well as extra water and electrolyte tablets. Walk Leader to carry a water filter in the mountains where there are no mains water stops for refills.
- Monitor the group throughout the activity, with regular rest stops for food and drink, and to also check the physical and mental state of the participants through simple questioning and observation. Symptoms of heat exhaustion: tiredness, dizzy, headache, nausea, sweating, heat rash, clammy, cramps, fast breathing/heart rate, high temperature, thirsty, weakness.
- Adjust the pace of the group if necessary, coupled with a flexible and dynamic route selection. Start earlier, if possible and/or practical. Consider changes to the route, if possible and/or practical - lower level, easier, more escape routes, more access to water etc.
- As part of their route planning, Walk Leaders should consider the amount of shade in the open moor/mountain environment and access to running fresh water for drinking and cooling people down if they start to show symptoms of heat exhaustion. These streams can also be used to help cool someone down by having cold drinks (use a water filter), dipping their hat in the stream or cooling their wrists etc. (see below for Extreme Heat Risk).

RISK

Exhaustion due to poor conditions

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- Understand the group before the walk commences - fitness levels, experience, medical conditions and whether they are wearing/carrying suitable clothing, footwear, provisions, gear and equipment.
- Monitor the group throughout the day for fitness levels and morale, with regular rest stops for food and drink and to also check the physical and mental state of the participants through simple questioning and observation.
- Adjust the pace of the group if necessary, coupled with a flexible and dynamic route selection
- Keep the walk within the ability of the group, and have alternative and escape routes.
- Ensure participants consume adequate food and drink, to maintain energy levels throughout the day.
- Walk Leaders to carry trekking poles on challenging walk, wild camping, long distance multi-day walks etc, which will help someone who is tired to walk.
- Walk Leader to offer a bar of Kendal Mint Cake to all participants, so that everyone has 'emergency rations' with them of high energy food.
- If the Walk Leader feels that environmental conditions and group/individual needs are not conducive to learning or navigating effectively (outdoor courses), or the Walk Leader believes the pace is slow in poor conditions and an alternative route is required, then the Mountain Leader will take over the navigation and guide the group effectively, efficiently and as quickly as is safely possible down from high ground to safer ground and conditions, or down to the valley. This may be via the use of map and compass and/or GPS for navigation if the Walk Leader felt that this would be quicker to better support the group.

RISK

Farm / wild animals / dogs

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- Dogs are only allowed dogs on certain walks/courses with prior written agreement from TeamWalking. The dog must be insured, wormed and kept on a lead at all times. Registered Assistance Dogs are always welcome.
- If we encounter livestock (cattle) on the walk and have dogs in the groups, we will let the people without dogs walk through the enclosure first, and then those with dogs will walk around the

perimeter of the enclosure, or look for an alternative route in an adjacent field. Horses and/or cattle and dogs do not mix, and they can become aggressive when they see a dog, particularly if they are dairy cattle or have calves. If a situation develops and the dog owner feels threatened by cattle, let the dog off its lead and make your way out of the enclosure (the cows are interested in the dog).

- Never walk between horses, cattle and/or cows and calves; walk around the perimeter of the field and note any escape routes. If a situation develops, leave the enclosure as quickly as possible;
- Do not allow anyone to stroke or aggravate farm or wild animals, for example horses or farm dogs.
- Do not allow anyone to stroke another walker's dog they may meet on the walk; dogs are unpredictable and may bite.
- Highlight the risks associated with ticks and Lymes Disease; ensure people check their skin for ticks, and advise how to safely remove them. Discuss symptoms of Lymes Disease including bullseye rash, which requires medical attention and treatment. This is highlighted on the Terms & Conditions, and also highlighted by email on more 'high risk' walks, which includes all Scottish walks, wild camping trips, multi-day hikes etc where exposure to ticks is increased due to prevalence in particular areas and time spent outdoors.

RISK

Stiles, wet rock and walls

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- Wet stiles and rock (limestone, slate, shales, granite) are slippery underfoot - this is a common slip hazard and one that must be briefed to the group about foot placement, using hands and keep hands out of pockets.
- Walk Leader will endeavour to cross stiles, footbridges and other potentially slippery surfaces first, to assess the traction of the surface. Brief the group about: avoiding wet rock, particularly sloping rock with algae and/or lichen - step on thicker grass instead; good foot placement with traction; testing rock first by moving boot across the rock to see how slippery it is.
- Brief participants about the correct way to cross a stile. Ladder stiles - face the stile and always maintain hand contact with the stile; be particularly aware of wet wood/rock. Wall/fence step-over stiles - always maintain hand contact, be aware of heavy rucksacks, step over not onto the top of the wall or fence.
- Walk Leader to spot any high or slippery stiles, narrow paths across steep slopes or easy wet rock steps. The Walk Leader must assess which side of the stile presents most risk, and then position themselves accordingly to 'spot' the stile. Verbal warnings and/or instructions may suffice.
- No drystone walls should be climbed - use stiles or gates or broken sections of wall wherever possible - as drystone walls may collapse and cause injury to participants as well as damaging 3rd party property. If there is no alternative, then cross the drystone wall at its lowest point, preferably at a junction or intersection, with good 'through stones' for foot placement and cross by sitting on the top of the wall, not standing on top of the wall. The Walk Leader must 'spot' people crossing the wall and ensure any dislodged stones are replaced back to their original position.

RISK

Slips, trips and falls

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- Brief the group about slips, trips and falls being the most common 'incident' in the outdoors.
- Highlight risks associated with wet grass, muddy ground, woodland, riversides, moorland as well as wet rock and stream crossings, all of which are very slippery.
- Highlight the risk associated with slipping on wet grass whilst wearing Gore-Tex waterproofs, which are very slippery. The Walk Leader to assess the slope and choose the best route with regards to steepness, slip hazards, slope run-off, terrain, vegetation etc

- *Raise awareness of the issue, and discuss prevention - foot placement, watch where walking, hands out of pockets, wet rock and wet grass are slippery. Walk Leader to assess potentially slippery ground first, to assess the traction of the surface. Brief the group about: walking on thicker grass/vegetation to avoid thin wet grass (slip hazard); hands out of pockets walking across uneven terrain (rocks, woodland) etc.*
- *Brief the group that the most effective risk assessment they can personally take is to simply look where they are putting their feet to avoid a potential trip or slip hazard.*
- *Brief group about correct way to ascend/descend steeper ground (zig-zags, steady plod, small steps, edging) and avoidance of wet, thin grass on mud, which presents a high slip risk.*
- *On narrow paths, the Walk Leader to ensure their group 'hugs the hillside' so that they are not on the edge of a narrow path in case of a slip, trip or fall.*

RISK

Open Country - terrain

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- *Specifics hazards of heather, bog, wet, rough, rocky or steep ground.*
- *Additional hazards of potential for poorer weather conditions and also burn more energy and use more water*
- *Ensure all group members are carrying sufficient food, water, gear and equipment, in particular extra high energy food, spare fleece, hat, gloves and head-torch*
- *Tread lightly and carefully as the moors and mountains are fragile landscapes that support rare wildlife.*
- *Discuss with the group the hazards with regards to terrain and how to avoid them; ensure people watch carefully with regards to their foot placement and keep hands out of pockets. Brief group about slips/trips/falls, hidden holes in heather, vegetation types that are likely to be wet/dry, crossing streams correctly (walk through it rather than hopping onto stones as may lead to slip), sphagnum moss to avoid (risk of getting soaked up to waist in bog).*
- *Brief group about correct way to ascend/descend steep ground (zig-zags, steady plod, small steps, balance, edging) and avoidance of wet, thin grass on mud, which presents a high risk of a slip*
- *Walking through boggy areas - the Leader to walk at the front and choose a safe route through the boggy area. Keep the group close together and in single file, following the leader's route. In difficult terrain or weather conditions, instruct the group to walk in single file following the Leader's footprints precisely. For particularly boggy areas or sunken flagstones, the Leader to use walking poles to point to the safe foot placement points and to test the depth of the bog.*
- *In poor conditions (rain, wind, mist etc), the Walk Leader to brief and ensure everyone stays within close proximity of each other. If practical, have people 'buddy up' in pairs. If someone needs to stop or have a break, then they must ensure the group are aware that they require a break.*
- *Ensure everyone knows the Separation / Lost procedure (see below).*

RISK

Injury to Walk Leader

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- *Carry laminated 'Injury to Mountain Leader' information sheet in leader's rucksack. Inform the group of where this is to be found.*
- *Keep the group informed of their location regularly throughout the walk.*
- *Discuss Emergency Procedures with the group, particularly for more remote and mountainous walks.*
- *When Wild Camping, inform the group of the wild camp location and show the group the location on a map.*

RISK

Open Country - other users

WHO - Public | LIKELIHOOD - Medium | CONSEQUENCE - Low

CONTROL MEASURES

- Check Open Access website for closures.
- Discuss with group that moorland is a working environment that is managed for shooting, and to be aware of ground-nesting birds as well as other users (shooters, gamekeepers).
- Tread lightly and carefully across the moorland to avoid damaging the fragile habitats
- Be aware of predator traps when walking across moorland - stoat/weasel traps, snares etc
- If meet a shoot during the day, make yourself known and keep to Rights of Way or visible tracks/paths.
- Dogs (general public) - do not allow anyone to stroke another walker's dog they may meet on the walk; dogs are unpredictable and may bite.
- Large groups - the Walk Leader to be aware of other groups of walkers, and assess any risk they pose. Find a safe area to stand and wait for the large group to pass. On steeper ground, never stand below other groups in case of rock fall, slips etc. On narrow paths, the Walk Leader to ensure their group 'hugs the hillside' when passing other groups so that they are not on the edge of a narrow path; move the group onto the side of the path closest to the hillside to allow the other group to pass by.
- Mountain Bikes, Trail Bikes, Off-Road Vehicles. Be aware of the classification of the Right of Way (bridleway, byway etc), and look out for other users (horses, bikes etc). Brief the group that they may encounter other users. If other users are encountered (for example Mountain Bikes), then brief the group to stand together in a safe place on the path/track, and allow the other users to pass.

RISK

Remote supervision - navigation training

WHO - Participants | LIKELIHOOD - Low | CONSEQUENCE - Medium

CONTROL MEASURES

- Ensure everyone knows the Separation / Lost procedure (see below).
- Maintain sight contact as much as possible.
- Obtain mobile phone numbers of each group member; ask if they have a whistle with them (optional - many rucksacks now have integral whistles)
- Ensure the area you are walking in is bounded by clear overshoot / collecting features, and brief these to the group.

RISK

Night navigation/walking

WHO - Participants | LIKELIHOOD - Low | CONSEQUENCE - Medium

CONTROL MEASURES

- During night navigation exercises or night walking, ensure everyone in the group has a working head-torch. Walk Leader to carry spare batteries (AA and AAA) and a spare torch.
- Ensure everyone knows the Separation / Lost procedure (see below).
- Walk Leader to brief the group to stay within sight and sound of each other.
- Keep to easier terrain and linear features (tracks/paths/water courses, escarpments etc) wherever possible - avoid steep, broken or wet ground.
- Walking speed will be reduced; brief group about foot placement and to exercise extra care and attention to spot hazards
- The pace of the group will decrease - plan shorter routes with options to cut the route short if necessary
- It is colder at night - Walk Leader to carry additional spare clothing (fleece, gloves) plus a hot drink in a flask.

RISK

Participants separated/lost from group in poor conditions, visibility or remote locations

WHO - Participants | LIKELIHOOD - Low | CONSEQUENCE - Medium

CONTROL MEASURES FOR POOR CONDITIONS/VISIBILITY OR REMOTE LOCATIONS

- Ensure everyone knows the Separation / Lost procedure (see below).
- Brief the group to stay within sight and sound of each other (close proximity) at all times.
- Ask if they have a whistle with them (many rucksacks now have integral whistles)

- **Walk Leader to give out their mobile phone number to all participants prior to the walk commencing; the participants to put this mobile phone number into their phones.** Take note of each participant's mobile phone number, if they have one. This is captured on their Consent Forms.
- **In poor conditions, look at the map and see if the area you are walking in is bounded by clear overshoot / collecting features, and brief these to the group.**
- **Brief group to inform Walk Leader if a participant needs to stop to adjust clothing, toilet, drink etc.**
- **Increased vigilance of Walk Leader in poor weather conditions to ensure group stays together. If practical, have people 'buddy up' in pairs.**
- **If appropriate, the Walk Leader will brief the participants to follow his/her line precisely.**
- **Give all participants an Emergency safety bearing (easy to remember bearing that will get them to a clear linear feature, such as a road or valley) if appropriate and viable (they may not all have compasses etc).**
- **Appoint a responsible adult as a 'back marker'**

SEPARATION / LOST PROCEDURE

- **Separation procedure** - Participants to stay where they are, stay together and stay on a footpath - the Walk Leader will re-trace & find you. The separated participant(s) to try calling the mobile phone number of the Walk Leader, also blow their whistle(s) as per the International Distress Signal and ensure they are in a prominent location so their head-torch(es) may be seen. If the participant is still waiting to be found after 30-minutes, see below Lost Procedure.
- Once Walk Leader realises a member of his/her part has become separated, then he/she to re-trace their route (along with the remaining group members) to the last known point that the group were all together. They will also try calling the separated participant's mobile phone. If the Walk Leader and his group reach the last known group location without a find, then they will then re-trace back to the location where they realised they had a separated walker, but this time spreading out in a line to conduct a 'sweep search'. Whistles should be blown as per the international distress signal, as well as vocal shouts and observation for head-torch lights
- **Lost procedure** - If the participant is still waiting to be found after 30-minutes and has tried calling the Walk Leader's mobile phone, then the separated participant should either (a) continue walking along the planned route (if confident to do so), (b) retrace their steps back to the start (if confident to do so), (c) follow the safety bearing if they are lost (whilst being vigilant for hazards and dangerous ground) or, in the case of children, (d) stay where they are but seek higher ground to make themselves more visible, (e) seek advice, help or assistance from other people on the hill/mountain. The participant must not walk off with strangers/helpers, but must attempt to relocate the group.
- They must continue to try calling the Walk Leader's mobile phone, as well as use their whistle and torch.
- If they meet other competent walkers then they may wish to consider walking off with them.
- If/when they reach safety it is essential they make contact with the Walk Leader, the Police (who will inform Mountain Rescue) or a responsible adult.
- The Walk Leader to call out Mountain Rescue team, giving details of the last known position, briefed safety bearing and contact details of the lost walker.

RISK

Steep ground (mountains)

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- **Dangerous steep ground to be avoided, as part of the route plan and route finding/navigation.**
- **Routes that do include steep ground will be no steeper than a Grade 1 scramble (see below).**
- **All members of the group will be assessed as to their ability to tackle steep and mountainous ground; they will also be asked about their experience of mountain walking and scrambling.**

- The Walk Leader will demonstrate appropriate skills and techniques to tackle steep ground, such as boot placement, edging, smearing, bridging, use of hands and route choice; the walk leader will demonstrate and check understanding of these techniques and skills.
- On steep slopes, the Walk Leader will demonstrate good foot placement (maximum friction), small steps whilst ascending/descending steep ground (to avoid straining muscles), good balance over boots (avoid leaning), 'hugging the hillside' to keep away from steep slopes whilst walking on narrow paths, zig-zags, edging etc. This will reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls.
- Trekking/walking poles to be collapsed and put away when walking on steep ground, as it is essential for participants to use their hands for balance. Alternatively, Walk Leader to instruct participants to remove their hands from the loop straps so if they do slip or trip they can let go of their poles.
- On rock steps, the Walk Leader may need to spot participants to prevent a slip becoming a fall. The Walk Leader must brief participants that spotting may involve grabbing the participant's clothing or rucksack, or holding their body; the Walk Leader must explain that physical contact (pushing/ grabbing/holding) will only occur if they slip to prevent a fall.
- On steep, rocky or mountainous terrain the Walk Leader will brief the participants to follow his/her line precisely or, if spotting is required, to wait at a designated safe point above the rock step - the Walk Leader must always check a participant's understanding of where this safe point to wait is. The Walk Leader will ALWAYS: insist that participants follow their line; spot people on rock steps if there is ANY possibility of a slip/fall with consequence; spot everyone, not just nervous/novice walkers.
- In poor conditions (rain, wind, mist etc), the Walk Leader to brief and ensure everyone stays within close proximity of each other. If practical, have people 'buddy up' in pairs. If someone needs to stop or have a break, then they must ensure the group are aware that they require a break.
- If the Walk Leader is spotting a participant up a rock step, then they must ensure that they (Walk Leader) are always in a safe position, and not stood next to an exposed drop. The Walk Leader must also ensure that they do not climb up into a difficult position on steep/exposed ground, as it is easier to climb up than descend - never climb up something you cannot climb down.
- Walk Leader must be aware of the risk of rock/scree falls on steep ground, by ensuring no-one is above or below any member of the group, or other walking party in the mountains; this will be achieved by zig-zagging up/down a steep slope. Walk Leader must brief the group about the warning signal of 'Below' - this is to be shouted if a rock is dislodged and falls; brief the group about what action to take if they hear 'below' being shouted (move swiftly to avoid the rock(s), protect head with arms).
- Other people/groups - Walk Leader to be aware of other groups of walkers, and assess any risk they may pose. Find a safe area to stand together and wait for the other group to pass; do not pass other groups on narrow paths and/or steep ground. On steep ground, never stand below other groups in case of rock fall, slips etc.
- The Walk Leader must carry a confidence rope and/or a long sling in the mountains. This decision to carry a long sling instead of a rope in the mountains is down to the Walk Leader and will be based on their experience and skill level, research and knowledge of the route, knowledge of the group, weather conditions, whether it is technical or graded terrain etc. Not all mountain routes require a rope, for example a guided walk up the Old Man of Conistoun via the main Low Water path that the Walk Leader has previous experience of may not require a rope to be carried; however, the Walk Leader cannot foresee whether a participant may have vertigo or agoraphobia, for example, and so a long sling must be carried as a minimum in mountainous areas for confidence use.
- Ropes or a sling may be used for confidence, with a simple loop around a participant's waist to provide security and confidence on steep ground. This must only take place if the Walk Leader is confident on the steep ground, and must be within the remit of the NGB ML Award.
- Emergency ropework (belay, abseil) should only be used as a last resort in an emergency situation (never the planned use of a rope), and then it must be used within the remit of the NGB ML Award. It is most likely that such ropework will be used to descend a rock step to safer ground.
- Walk Leaders must be competent and experienced leading on this type of terrain; it may be necessary for TeamWalking to check their Log Book to assess their competence and experience.

RISK

Scrambling (Grade 1)

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

Grade 1 scrambles (such as Striding Edge) are within remit of the summer Mountain Leader (ML) award, as long as the ML is not PLANNING to use a rope, but a rope is only carried for confidence or emergency. The following must be taken into account if considering Grade 1 scrambles:

- 1) Purpose - is it the most suitable option for the group based on their aims and objectives?
- 2) Group ability - experience, how well do they move on steep ground, pre-existing medical conditions, behavioural issues or challenging group dynamics?
- 3) Risks - ensure everyone is fully aware and understand the risks associated with scrambling.
- 4) Knowledge of route - ensure the Walk Leader is familiar with the route and is able to operate safely on steep ground. A good working knowledge of the intended route will equip you with a thorough understanding of potential difficulties, avoidable sections, escape routes and descent routes, among other considerations. *These four points have been taken from the Mountain Training website.*

CONTROL MEASURES

- *The Walk Leader needs to be confident that the route is a 'walking route' of no more than Grade 1 either through extensive research or route knowledge and experience.*
- *Rope must be carried by the Walk Leader for confidence roping or emergency use only.*
- *For novice groups, young people or technical terrain with the risk of rocks falling from above then it may be necessary to put helmets on them; this is a decision for the Walk Leader and must be made at the start of the walk.*
- *Clear briefing about the risks, techniques and what Grade 1 scrambling involves.*
- *Brief group and check understanding about 3-points of contact, avoiding exposed sections, slips/trips/falls, ensuring hand and foot placements are sound before moving up or down steep sections.*
- *Brief group about spotting - some body contact may be necessary to prevent a slip becoming a fall (this is usually the Walk Leader's hands supporting their rucksack, although in the event of a slip contact may be anywhere).*
- *Assess the group on the walk-in as to their ability to tackle steep and mountainous ground; they will also be asked about their experience. The Walk Leader will demonstrate appropriate skills and techniques to tackle steep ground and Grade 1 scrambles, such as boot placement, edging, smearing, bridging, use of hands, balance and route choice; the walk leader will demonstrate and check understanding of these techniques and skills.*
- *Weather conditions must be favourable, with winds of less than 30 mph on the ridge; if there is rain forecast or it is wet underfoot, check the traction of boots on the wet rock.*
- *Ratios of no more than 1:8*
- *Careful group management essential - spotting, coaching, leading the group along the correct line, keeping group close together.*
- *Walk Leaders must be competent and experienced leading on this type of terrain; it may be necessary for TeamWalking to check their Log Book to assess their competence and experience.*
- *TeamWalking has produced a separate Steep Ground "Flow Chart" to enhance our Operating Procedures and Risk Assessments specifically for Steep Ground / Grade 1 terrain. This is an addendum to these Risk Assessments (please see appendix).*

RISK

Water, streams and rivers

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- *Be aware of stream/river levels. In lowland areas, only cross rivers using footbridges or stepping stones. When using stepping stones, the river levels must be low and the stepping stones must be large and safe to cross (use designated stepping stones only). Walk Leader to cross stepping stones first to assess the integrity of the stones, depth and flow of the water and whether the crossing is*

suitable. Assess the group as to their agility, ability and competence in crossing stepping stones. Never cross stepping stones across a river if the water is flowing over the stones, fast-flowing or in spate; or if the stones are unstable, slippery or broken. If this is the case then find an alternative crossing point using a footbridge.

- In hill and mountain areas there are often many streams to cross, and occasionally wider streams and rivers to cross, particularly in Scotland and the more remote areas of the Lake District such as Great Moss. Only cross streams by walking through the stream with low water levels (do NOT boulder hop across rounded and/or slippery stones) or find a narrow section you can step across. If absolutely necessary to cross a river, the river crossing must be managed by the Walk Leader in accordance with the NGB guidelines, and a 'dry run' carried out - use the Line Astern technique for group movement across a river. Only cross a stream or river if there is no alternative or it is unsafe to use an alternative route. Find a straight section of river to cross without hazards downstream (such as waterfalls etc); avoid meandering sections as the outside bend flows faster with more unstable banks. Do not remove boots (although may wish to remove socks), as this may cause foot injuries. Unfasten rucksack belts and straps, and move across the stream/river facing upstream leaning into a trekking pole for balance; this can be done individually if the river levels are low and the water is not fast flowing. If the river is deeper and fast flowing and there is no alternative, then use 'Line Astern' method by moving as a group in a line facing upstream with the person at the front leaning into a trekking pole and the other participants behind this person holding onto the person in front. The Walk Leader must be satisfied that river levels and the river environment are not a hazard and that the group are capable of crossing; never cross a stream or river that is in spate or flood where it is unsafe to cross, find alternative route or wait for river levels to drop, if appropriate. Practice the Line Astern method on dry land before entering the river. Do NOT use a rope to cross a river.
- Avoid flooded land, riverside paths that are in flood and fast-flowing river/water.
- Be aware of weather forecast and history with regards to crossing upland streams - fast-flowing water above ankle depth is a significant hazard.

RISK

Lunch stops / rest breaks (participants wandering off onto dangerous ground)

WHO - Participants | LIKELIHOOD - Low | CONSEQUENCE - Medium

CONTROL MEASURES

- Choose sites that are away from overhanging trees, crags, rocks etc, and are away from steep ground and cliffs wherever possible
- If any areas are out of sight or hidden, walk around to assess any dangers
- If there are any hazards or dangers within close proximity, brief the group about areas that are out of bounds, and give reasons why.
- Make everyone aware of where they can go to the toilet - ensure this is a safe area away from steep or loose ground.
- Participants often get cold in colder conditions or poor weather, so use a Group Shelter for lunch/rest breaks. It is important people eat food and drink fluids during a walk. Manage the group's expectations with regards to time available, and give the group a specific duration for the break. Explain that a Group Shelter adds up to 10 degrees C to the temperature, as sometimes people are reluctant to get in the Group Shelter. Get people to sit on the ground next to each other in a rectangle shape and then pull the Group Shelter over their heads. Carry a Group Shelter that is larger than your group size (e.g. an 8 person shelter for 6 people etc).

RISK

Tiredness at the end of the day/descent - slips, trips and falls

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- According to Mountain Rescue websites, many accidents happen during the afternoon and early evening, particularly on the descent, as people are tired, slightly dehydrated and low on blood sugar and so lose concentration and 'drop their guard' as the end of the day is within sight.
- Ensure the walk is achievable and within everyone's fitness and ability levels as much as possible.
- Ensure that the group stops for a rest, food and water before heading 'off the hill' during the latter part of the walk.
- Brief the group the reasons why they are stopping for food and water and explain that many accidents happen on the descent; this risk can be reduced with knowledge about the body's physiology and how water and sugar can 'perk' their brains and muscles to aid concentration.

RISK

Camping in remote location (wild camping - mountains) & camping in organised campsites (valleys)

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- Be aware of group members at the end of the day's walk - tiredness, injury etc.
- Choose suitable location given the weather conditions, to avoid poor sleep, broken tents, water logging - sheltered from wind, raised ground away from water-logging or flooding and raised area to avoid cold air that sinks.
- Demonstrate suitable pitching locations, looking for flat ground, sheltered, slightly raised and remove sharp debris (sticks, stones etc), and also how to pitch tents (aerodynamic, foot into wind, guy lines etc). Demonstrate lying down to find comfortable pitch site.
- Be aware of escape routes in case need to evacuate in the night. Brief the group to keep their belongings and inner of their tent organised, with unused items and clothing packed away. Have head-torches close to hand. Walk Leader to mark their map with their location or verbally locate where the group is and share this with the group, in case of injury to the Walk Leader.
- **Evacuation Protocol** - Walk Leader instructs all the group members to pack everything away in their rucksacks whilst remaining in their tents, to then put full waterproof clothing on (if it is raining), hat, gloves, boots and head-torch so that they are fully packed up and ready to walk (with the exception of their tents); they are then instructed to remain in their tents until the Walk Leader tells them to leave. They have a short timeframe to do this, usually around 10 minutes. The Walk Leader then packs up their own kit. Once everyone has packed up everything into their rucksacks and are ready to walk, everyone leaves their tents and takes their tents down, rolling them up to two pegs left in the ground into the wind (to avoid the tent blowing away), and then pack the tent away in the tent bag. Check the area for pegs, litter, belongings etc. Stuff the tent in the top of their rucksacks and then, once everyone is ready, walk out. This reduces the potential to get cold by minimising the amount of time standing around.
- Discuss hygiene and water collection from fast-flowing streams (check upstream 100 metres for dead animals)
- Designate water collection points and discuss water purification (rolling boil for 5 minutes). Ensure all water is purified before consumption - no water to be drunk straight from streams or lakes without being boiled first.
- Ensure participants observe good hygiene procedures when cooking or preparing food. Always wash hands in a stream (below water collection point) and use alcohol-based hand gels, particularly after going to the toilet.
- Toilet protocol - at least 50 metres away from water sources & paths; designate toilet areas and what to do (bury waste in a shallow hole in soil, put a small stone on top of the area that has been used, use hand sanitiser gel afterwards). The hand sanitiser gel is the 'toilet engaged' sign; when it's gone then the toilet area is in use.
- Discuss and demonstrate use of stoves - away from tent, ventilated, stable flat ground. Brief group about risks of stoves toppling over or pans slipping off stoves, with potential for scolds/burns. Always use stoves at arm's length and do not sit next to a stove. Supervise initial cooking session, and then undertake regular checks whilst people are cooking. Cooking should be done in an agreed communal area with stoves grouped together, so that the stoves and boiling water are in one location. In heavy rain, then cooking may be done at 'arm's length' out of the porch door away from the tent; ensure the tent

fabric will not flap and touch the stove or flame. Demonstrate the safe and effective use of camping stoves from inside tents. This will allow the person to remain dry inside the tent, whilst still keeping the stove outside away from the tent.

- Do not store or use stoves in or near tents (unless it is raining and the tents are wet - see above using stoves at arm's length outside the porch) due to fire and carbon monoxide risk; store fuel away from stoves and tents, and detach the gas cartridge from the stove. Spare fuel canisters to be kept with the Walk Leader.*
- Carry burns dressings in First Aid kit, and a means of water purification such as filter.*
- Ensure all wet clothing is removed and dry clothing put on when retiring to the tent for the night; wet/damp clothing can be put back on in the morning on a multi-day expedition to ensure dry clothing for the next night. Discuss how the inner of the tent is a 'dry zone' and to take wet kit off before getting into the inner of the tent.*
- How to stay warm during the night - wear dry clothing and hat, have hot drinks and food.*
- Make sure everyone fully closes the zips on their inner and flysheet, to stop midges, ticks and insects getting into the tent and to keep rain out. Put all kit inside the porch or inner, to keep it dry.*
- Assess dangers around camp site (craggs, steep ground, water etc), and brief the group about 'out of bounds' areas, particularly during the night.*
- Brief group to stay near or next to their tents if need toilet during the night. Do not walk away from the tents.*
- No open fires allowed, and all rubbish must be carried out - leave no trace.*
- No alcohol whilst wild camping, due to remote and mountainous environment*
- Campsites: Brief group about location of: fire extinguishers, fire alarm bell, drinking water tap, toilets, campsite shop, campsite facilities.*
- Campsites: Pitch tents 3 metres apart, in case of fire.*
- Campsites: do NOT pitch tents underneath large trees if it is windy or high winds are forecast or beside streams if it has been raining or rain is forecast, in case of strong wind/flood. Choose sheltered camping pitches that on slightly raised or higher ground. Pitch tents away from tracks that are used by vehicles.*
- Campsites: If using a nearby pub during the evening for food and drink, brief the group about restricting alcohol consumption and minimising fluid intake, particularly if it is cold, as alcohol dilates blood vessels, and too much fluid will mean getting out of their sleeping bag in the night.*
- Campsites: Leaders to bring bag of warm spare clothing, in case anyone is cold.*
- Brief group about guy-line trip hazards when walking around the tents.*
- Brief group about inflating sleep-mats correctly, 'plumping' up sleeping bags to loft the insulation, wearing base layers and hat in the sleeping bag to keep warm and keeping the inside of the tent a 'dry' area (all wet kit to be taken off before they get into the tent or in the porch).*
- Taking down tents in bad weather: similar protocol as the Evacuation Protocol, where everyone packs up everything into their rucksacks and gets ready to walk inside their tents then, once everyone is ready, they take their tents down and roll them up to two pegs left in the ground into the wind (to avoid the tent blowing away), and then pack the tent away in the tent bag. Check the area for pegs, litter, belongings etc. Stuff the tent in the top of their rucksacks and then, once everyone is ready, walk out. This reduces the potential to get cold by minimising the amount of time standing around.*
- Ensure 'leave no trace' ethos is followed when leaving camp. Discuss with the group about checking for ticks, and what to do about ticks (see above).*

RISK

Backpacking - heavy rucksacks

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- Send detailed information about what to wear and bring. Ensure all walkers are briefed prior to the walk about the potential weight of their rucksack.*
- The Walk Leader to demonstrate what he/she is carrying in their rucksack.*
- The Walk Leader to look at the contents of everyone's rucksacks in the morning to ensure they have all of the essential equipment. Recommend they leave behind unnecessary equipment.*

- The Walk Leader to weigh everyone's rucksacks to ensure not too heavy. Ideally, all rucksacks to weigh between 12kg and 15kg. Above 15kg is potentially too heavy; empty their rucksack and ensure they only take essential equipment. Share stoves and some equipment between the group if necessary.
- The Walk Leader brief the group on correct heavy rucksack lifting procedures: bent knees, straight back.
- Stop walking after about 1 hour to allow people to adjust their rucksacks. The Walker Leader to assess and adjust people's rucksacks on their back - rucksack to sit straight down the back, resting on hips.
- Maintaining good balance with a heavy rucksack. Early in the walk, brief the group about good foot placement, balance (gravity) over boots, small steps etc, and demonstrate good practice on safe ground. Make group aware of their heavy rucksacks, and how they can cause them to go off-balance if they lean too much to the side or front/back.
- Good route choice - follow good, well-graded paths as much as possible to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls with a heavy rucksack. Avoid narrow paths, steep ground, narrow ridges, scrambling etc in strong winds or poor conditions, or after assessment of the participants ability.

RISK

Road walking - being hit by vehicles

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- Route planning and navigation to avoid roads wherever possible, particularly A and B roads.
- Pay particular attention for sharp bends and narrow roads when planning from the map
- Brief participants to walk in single file on the safest side of the road, ensuring that everyone is visible to traffic.
- Ensure the first and last in the group are wearing highly visible clothing, rucksack cover or torch.
- If walking along roads at dusk or nighttime, then Walk Leader to walk at the front of the group and everyone must wear a head-torch, and move onto the verge or a safe area (lay-by, gateway etc) if a car approaches. Do not look directly at the driver whilst wearing a head-torch to avoid risk of dazzling the driver.

RISK

Blisters

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- Blisters are friction burns, and are caused by ill-fitting boots, poor quality socks or damaged footbeds. Blister plasters can only do so much to remedy the problem.
- Brief group to tell the Walk Leader about any hot spots in their boots BEFORE it becomes a problem, and then use blister plasters on the affected area.
- For multi-day walks, consider change of footwear, for example new boots if there is an outdoor shop available.
- On multi-day walks, if someone has blisters then ensure that they keep the blister dry and clean, and regularly reapply blister plasters. The Walk Leader to assess blisters daily to avoid infection or loss of skin. If there is skin loss then the Walk Leader to advise the participant with the blisters to change footwear to different boots or stop walking.

RISK

Assisting other distressed walkers in the countryside (injured, lost, hypothermic, in distress etc)

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- The Walk Leader's priority is their group.
- Before approaching other walker(s) in distress, assess for danger. The Walk Leader to instruct his/her group to remain at a safe distance together whilst the Walk Leader assesses the situation.
- The Walk Leader to provide reasonable assistance to the distressed walker(s), as long as it does not put his/her group in danger or jeopardy.

- The Walk Leader will offer advice or follow Emergency Procedures, if required.
- The Walk Leader will not use any of his/her gear or equipment (torches, group shelter, First Aid kit), unless in a medical emergency, as this will then deplete the Walk Leader's essential kit.
- Do NOT touch/hold other people's dogs.

RISK

Climate Change - weather extremes (heat, wildfires, flooding)

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- No smoking on any walks due to fire risk, and also Walk Leader's working environment.
- **HEAT** - check forecast beforehand and on the day and adapt routes accordingly. **Weather conditions 20 to 25 degrees C** - consider the nature of the route and whether it is a suitable walk, how high the walk goes (air temperature cools as ascend), wind speed and cloud cover, water refill places, physical nature of the walk, group experience and fitness etc. Plan, adapt and dynamically change the route according to the weather conditions and group needs. **Weather conditions 25 to 30 degrees C** - consider lower routes with more shade and less exertion, start earlier, plan in escape routes and water refill locations, carry a water filter for the hills/mountains, consider whether to go ahead with the walk - is there a suitable lower alternative? **Weather conditions over 30 degrees C** - consider either a low level route with shade, water refill locations and several escape routes OR cancel the walk. For all walks, ensure everyone has sun protection, plenty of water (at least 2 litres) and electrolytes - send email outlining the conditions and what to bring in addition to usual kit (extra water, sun protection, electrolytes). Walk Leader to carry spare water, electrolyte tablets and, possibly, a water filter. Monitor the group throughout the day for signs of heat illness.
- **FIRE** - wildfires in uplands areas due to hot and/or dry conditions. Brief the group about no flames, smoking or leaving any glass behind. Encourage everyone to stay alert for any signs of fire, and to make sure everyone knows what to do in an emergency: Avoid moving uphill if a fire is approaching; move downhill away from the fire and into prevailing wind if possible – flames and smoke spread faster uphill. Pay attention to wind direction and strength, as this can change the speed and path of the fire. Keep an eye out for rocky, open, or sparsely vegetated areas that could offer safer ground. Call 999 immediately if we see a fire or feel at risk. In the event of a wildfire, stop the walk and evacuate the wildfire area to a safe place a significant distance away, taking into consideration weather, wind conditions, terrain, group needs and walking activity.
- **CAMPING & FIRE RISK** - only use stoves in an area free from vegetation, ideally a rocky area with flat rocks to safely stand the stoves and close to water (always use stoves at arm's length and do not sit next to a stove in case it topples over). Choose a sheltered area to reduce wind. Monitor the stoves throughout cooking, and ensure turned off after use. If high fire risk, the Walk Leader to set up, ignite and turn off any stoves that novice campers are using (rather than demonstrate safe use of stoves), to avoid any flare-ups or incorrect use. Have a container of water to hand in case of fire. Ensure gas canister connected properly before use and disconnected fully after use. Allow stove to cool down in a safe place after use. Store gas canisters away from cooking area when not in use.
- **FLOODS** - check forecast beforehand and on the day and adapt routes accordingly. Consider changing the walk to higher ground away from flood risk and only use bridges to cross streams and rivers, and consider changing location (if possible) to higher ground away from flood zones.
- Consider cancelling the walk if red national weather warning.

RISK

Site specific hazards

CONTROL MEASURES

- If required, produce a specific Risk Assessment for a walk if there are any notable risks that require additional mitigation over and above these Generic Risk Assessments; this may include pre-existing

health conditions. Highlight hazards from the Route Plan (and management/action points), weather forecast, prior knowledge of the area and group.

Dynamic risk assessment

- The planned route, weather/ground conditions and group's ability will be constantly assessed as we progress to ensure that their group stays as safe as is reasonably possible. Dynamic and adaptive route choice and decision making as the walk progresses, taking into account weather conditions, weather forecast, ground conditions, our location, pace of the group, fitness and ability of the group, group needs, time availability, season, achievability, enjoyment levels, emotions of group members etc (this is not an exhaustive list). Also, the Walk Leader will demonstrate good observation skills, spatial awareness, situational awareness and group awareness to assess for potential risks that can be reasonably foreseen with regards to the environment, weather, terrain, group dynamics/management and other 3rd parties (other walkers, livestock etc), whilst also taking into account the purpose of the walk and aspirations of the group. The Walk Leader must then make sound judgements and decisions with regards to the mitigation of those risks as much as is reasonably possible.

The priority is to ensure all participants have a safe, enjoyable and rewarding experience that is within their abilities



TEAM TRAINING DAY / ZOOM MEETINGS

All Freelance Walk Leaders to be invited

- In early spring each year organise a Zoom meeting with Freelancer Walk Leaders to discuss: Operating Procedures, Risk Assessments, Reporting, Incidents, Injuries and Feedback.
First meeting took place 13/03/25
- Arrange an annual 'Freelancers Day' for a walk in early spring where we discuss Operating Procedures, Risk Assessments, good practice/ideas, feedback plus any other aspects.

GOOD DECISION MAKING - IDEAS

All Freelance Walk Leaders

- This is a huge topic, and one that is constantly being updated, thought through and reflected on by all good Walk Leaders. Essentially, being a Walk Leader is all about making good decisions and judgements. We are all human and so sometimes we all make mistakes or decisions that were not ideal; the key is the learn from these mistakes through feedback, reporting and reflective learning. Good decision making is based on knowledge, skills, experience, feedback and reflective learning that then allows the Walk leader to recognise the important factors to make the right judgements and decisions. Most decisions are straight forward and easy to make, however, sometimes decision making is more nuanced or difficult. Here are some pointers to help Walk Leaders make good decisions:
1. Good decision-making involves a structured approach to choosing between options, prioritise critical thinking (objective and reasoned judgments), and consider potential consequences. It's about being informed, evaluating alternatives, and making choices that take into account your purpose, values, ethics, situation, group needs, environment etc. You need to have good Environmental Awareness, Emotional Awareness, Situational Awareness and Spatial Awareness.
 2. Have foresight, rather than hindsight. Don't wait until something has happened or turned into a situation; listen to the alarms bells early on, which will be based on your knowledge and experience of similar situations (this is sometimes known as the Swiss Cheese Model - the small things add up to become big things). Intervene earlier to avoid more serious incidents.
 3. Remain calm, objective and as unemotional as possible to make good decisions.
 4. Be democratic and inform your group - I find that I make better decisions by talking through my thoughts and decision making process with my group and by coming up with 2 or 3 options. By

talking through each option then the right choice often becomes apparent, especially with the input from group members. This approach is not always suitable, for instance in an emergency or safety situation, however, in my experience many difficult decisions are often related to more 'grey' or complex situations that then benefitted from talking through the options with my group. In summary: Define the problem, identify what needs to be decided, gather information and perspectives, evaluate alternatives (what are the pros and cons of each option), consider consequences and potential outcomes of each option, talk these through with your group then make your decision.

5. In difficult situations or where participants may be trying to sway your decision so it matches their expectations (commitment trap), think "what would the Coroner say"? At the end of the day, the Walk Leader is ultimately responsible.
6. Decision making is fluid, dynamic, adaptive and constant. Do not be afraid to change your mind several times if the situation changes or evolves.
7. Reflective learning and feedback afterwards to improve.



SITE RISK ASSESSMENT

Meeting locations for our guided valley, hill and mountain walking in the British Isles

This is an addendum to our Generic Risk Assessment document.

Meeting Locations include:

- * Country Pubs, hotels, cafes, village halls
- * Car Parks, with facilities (toilets etc)
- * Youth Hostels

With pubs, hotels, cafes, village halls and Youth Hostels, we will strive to ensure that we have booked and confirmed with the establishment that we will be using their premises for a pre-walk meeting. We will request a private room or area within the premises, if possible. TeamWalking will confirm times and numbers attending prior to the walk. These premises will have their own insurances and be compliant with all fire, environmental health and regulatory requirements.

PREMISES

RISK

Slip, trips and falls

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- *Walk Leader to arrive early and walk around the meeting area/private room to ensure there are no trip hazards, such as cabling, steps, rugs, carpet etc.*
- *If the Walk Leader finds any hazards, then bring them to the attention of the management of the premises, and alert the participants to the risk*

RISK

Other users encroaching into our briefing area

WHO - Public | LIKELIHOOD - Low | CONSEQUENCE - Low

CONTROL MEASURES

- *Ensure that we book a private room or area within the premises.*

- *The Walk Leader to position his/her chair to manage the group and ensure other members of the public do not encroach within the private area*

RISK

Facilities, emergency escape and walk meeting point

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- *Ensure that the Walk Leader knows where the Fire Exits are, as well as the toilets, and then briefs the groups at the start of the pre-walk meeting about the facilities*
- *Brief clearly to the group where the Walk Leader would like to meet them to start the walk. Allow participants 10 minutes to get their kit, food, rucksacks together, and use the facilities. Ensure the meeting location is safe and not adjoining a busy road.*

RISK

Refreshments - provision of hot drinks

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- *Ensure that the hot drinks (tea / coffee) are served on a separate table in case of spillage*
- *Ask participants to collect their drinks in a controlled manner, with small groups (or tables of people) at one time*

CAR PARKS

RISK

Slip, trips and falls

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- *Walk Leader to arrive early and position his/her vehicle in a quiet corner of the car park, away from the entrance. He/she will walk around the immediate area of the car park to ensure there are no trip hazards, such as potholes, curbs etc.*
- *The Walk Leader will check the public toilets to ensure they are in a usable state, and there are no obvious slip or trip hazards.*
- *If the Walk Leader finds any hazards, then he/she will alert the participants to the risk.*

RISK

Safe briefing area

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

CONTROL MEASURES

- *Once participants have arrived and are ready to head out on the walk (rucksacks packed etc), then the Walk Leader will ensure that he/she uses a safe area of the car park for the pre-walk briefing. This will be in a quiet corner of the car park with no vehicular access, preferably on a grassed area.*
- *Ensure group stay together in the safe area. When working with children, ensure clearly brief areas that are out of bounds.*
- *If children wish to use the public toilets, then the Walk Leader must inspect the inside of the toilets to ensure it is free from other users before the children enter.*

Original Risk Assessment prepared: **3rd August 2013**

Updated: 5th May 2015, 11th January 2017, 30th July 2018, 11th January 2019, 15th June 2020, 13th January 2023, 17th March 2025, 12th August 2025, 16th Sept 2026

APPENDIX - WALK RISK ASSESSMENT FLOW CHART

Operating Procedures, Health & Safety Policy & Generic Risk Assessment



PRE-WALK - Send out Consent Forms and Confirmation Email & Walk Overview

Once Consent Forms received, follow up medical conditions or areas of concern (fitness, experience etc).
Produce Participants List. Plan suitable route(s) according to location, group size, aims, type of event/activity, fitness levels, experience, weather history/forecast etc. Ensure everyone is aware of what the walk may entail in terms of landscapes, terrain, hazards, weather, distance, timings etc.



PRE-WALK - Specific Walks Risk Assessments

Yorkshire Three Peaks / Challenge Walks
Valley, Hill & Guided Walks (Valley, Hill & Moorland)
Upland, Fell & Mountain walks (Mountain)

Get weather forecast, assess risks associated with weather forecast/history.
Medical / Health conditions that require specific Risk Assessment.
Produce Route Plan(s) for the day. Highlight any specific risks/actions for the specific route/group on Route Plan and Walk Risk Assessment.



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

To be sent a few days before the event:

Summary of the walk or a Route Plan (depending on the activity)
Weather details, and any hazards or action points (heat/cold/rain/wind etc)
Any additional kit participants should bring due to route and/or weather
Ensure all participants have received the Confirmation Email and Final Walk Summary email



MORNING OF WALK / CAR PARK - Specific Risks / Assessments / Kit

To go through on the day

Overview of the day / aims / objectives (*why are people there?*)
Briefing Sheet / Route Plan & Escapes / Gear Check / Weather Forecast / Specific Hazards / Action Points
Give spare map & emergency equipment to a party member, if appropriate (remote/mountainous routes)
Discuss any Medical Conditions with individuals (where they keep their medications, warning signs etc)
Discuss with everyone their experience (possible). Ask if anyone has any questions / concerns



WALK IN - Observations / Ability Assessment / training / use of kit

Discuss common accidents and incidents, and gradually introduce training through observation, demonstration and practice, e.g. crossing stiles, slopes, streams. Observe, adjust and/or demonstrate use of clothing and/or kit, if necessary/appropriate. Training on the walk-in in a structured and progressive way on easy and safe ground. Breathing, foot placement, body posture, balance, co-ordination, movement skills, centre of gravity. Observe the group during the first part of the walk for ability, fitness, agility, pace, kit, which will allow adjustments of route, pace, group dynamics etc to provide an achievable day for all.



THROUGHOUT THE WALK - focus, concentration, observation, dynamic, flexible

Keep focussed on individuals and group dynamics, pace, fitness and ability.
Flexible and dynamic route choice. Dynamic Risk Assessment throughout the day, for the unforeseen circumstances, hazards, appropriate route choice, achievability, timings, capabilities etc.



POST-WALK - feeling and feedback

How is everyone feeling? What feedback is there from people - plus, minus, interesting.
Any improvements or learning to take away from the day? Accident or Near Miss reporting (if required)

STEEP GROUND/ MOUNTAIN ADVENTURE FLOW CHART

Grade 1 scrambles, scree slopes, steep ground, loose rock etc

This flow chart complements the Generic Risk Assessment

PRE-WALK - Consent Forms, Walk Overview, Confirmation Email

Once Consent Forms received, follow up medical conditions or areas of concern (fitness, experience etc).

Ensure everyone is fully aware that the walk may include steep and/or grade 1 ground.

Weather forecast (mountain winds not to exceed 30mph)



MORNING OF WALK/CAR PARK - Specific Risks / Assessments / Kit

Weather forecast (mountain winds not to exceed 30mph)

Plan in escape routes and options to avoid Steep and/or Grade 1 ground if necessary

Ensure everyone has necessary kit (good boots, waterproofs, spare clothing, food, water etc); tape up finger rings; give out helmets. Guide to carry confidence rope and possibly helmet. Ensure boots are tied correctly, and no loops on trousers / gaiters that may catch. Trekking poles to be stowed away on steep ground.

Discuss with everyone their experience of steep ground and Grade 1 scrambles.



WALK IN - what are the risks / training / use of kit

Discuss feelings of uncertainty, nerves - normal to feel like this, but kit and training and focus will help. Training on the walk-in in a structured and progressive way on easy and safe ground. Demonstration first, then each person to practice.

Breathing, foot placement, body posture.

Agility - Balance - Co-ordination (ABC): warm up on some easy/safe rocks, with regards to balance, movement skills, centre of gravity, boot traction, use of legs/fooholds, hands for balance. Positioning/ safety - discuss consequences of a slip (would it lead to a fall?). Protect against slips and falls.

Ensure do not dislodge any loose rocks.

Ensure everyone follows the precise route of the Mountain Leader.

Less confident people immediately behind the Mountain Leader.

Spotting training. Looking after each other. Working as a team. Ensure safe positions. Ascent and Descent.



STEEP GROUND - focus, concentration, personal commitment

Helmets on. Kit, boots and clothing secured.

Focus on you and others in the group

Focus on feet, hands, balance, positioning and route choice (consequence)

Stand tall on the ridge - accept where we are and become calm in the environment

Agility - Balance - Co-ordination (ABC)

Concentration until helmets come off.

Work as a team - movement skills, positioning, loose rocks, spotting.