

Standards – Leading walks

1. Walk route is reconnoitred before the walk takes place so that the leader is familiar with the route; reconnaissance may also identify suitable lunch places, toilets, identify risks and tactics for avoiding or otherwise dealing with any hazards, blocked paths etc. Reconnaissance will also allow the leader to make a reasonable judgement as to whether or not the walk is within the capabilities of the group in view of the likely membership of the group. Reconnaissance should also identify the existence, strength or absence of telephone signals at various places along the route. Walk routes may need to be changed as a result of hazards or problems identified during a reconnaissance. Leaders are advised not to reccy walks alone and including the proposed back marker would be ideal.
2. Before the walk begins the leader should make a list of the names of the people attending and keep it available for checking during the walk. Walkers should have the option of adding an emergency contact phone number to their walk registration details, or should carry an ICE (In case of emergency) card.
3. Before the walk begins the leader should make a reasonable judgement as to whether or not all members of the group are appropriately dressed/equipped and capable to undertake the walk safely in the light of conditions at the time. Based on a reasonable judgement, the leader may wish to provide appropriate advice to a walker who is unlikely to cope with the route due to fitness or unsuitable clothing that they could be placing themselves at risk and, possibly other members of the group.
4. Before the walk begins the leader should have consulted a weather forecast for the day and planned any alterations to the route which might be necessary in the light of the forecast

5. Before the walk begins, if a back-marker has not already been appointed, the leader should agree with one of the members of the group that he/she will be a back-marker.
6. Before the walk begins, the leader should try to make any new members or visitors welcome and should give a brief description of the walk to the group.
7. Before a walk begins leaders will make a reasonable judgement about the participation in a walk of a dog, based on the apparent fitness or temperament of the dog and the existence or likely existence of any cattle along the route and the availability of short diversions available to the member with the dog especially in the case of suckler cattle with calves or any other animals which are likely to be aggressive towards a walker with a dog. Leaders will provide appropriate and reasonable advice to walkers with dogs based on this judgement if they are concerned that participation in the walk will place the walker and/or other group members at risk.
8. During the walk the back marker will be able to stop the group's progress should the group start to split/for stragglers to catch up and advise the leader of any difficulties or problems which may be occurring by signalling to the leader by whatever means is available. (whistle, shouting, phone, radio). If a radio is available the leader and the back marker can be in almost constant communication about progress, where the leader is waiting for the group to catch up and any obstacles, hazards etc which are being encountered.
9. During the walk, the leader should be leading from the front of the group, or at least close to the front and should regularly check behind to monitor the progress of the group, ideally by spotting the back marker and, if necessary, wait for people to catch up. The group should not continue walking until those who have had to catch up have had a short rest and should not set off immediately after the stragglers have caught up
10. The leader is responsible for managing the progress of the group and will

ensure that the pace of the group is within the capabilities of all of the members. The leader will decide when and where the group stops for breaks and the length of the break.

- 11.** If a member has significant difficulties in maintaining a reasonable pace, which is likely to place the group at risk, the leader may agree whatever strategy is necessary to resolve the issue. This could be altering the route, having the member wait in a safe place with one or more other members to be collected after the walk, having the member take an alternative, easier route along with one or more other members capable of navigating a safe route.
- 12.** The leader will be responsible for managing any incidents/accidents including the provision of first aid or the organisation of rescue/evacuation.
- 13.** At the end of the walk, the leader will check that all members of the group have returned safely and take appropriate action to locate any members who may be missing.