Ramblers Wellbeing Walks, Easy Access and Easy walks



**Name of Walk: Walk Leader: Date:**

Use this risk assessment as a starting point to think about your specific walk. We recommend making a note of any additional hazards.  
Review and share your plan with walkers on the day – and make changes if you need to.

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| What are the risks or hazards? | What could happen and who could be harmed? | **How we manage the risks** |
| Lack of confidence and/or skill | Leaders are stressed and overwhelmed | * All new walk leaders complete introductory training and make the most of opportunities to develop their skills * Peer support available from more experienced leaders * Leaders only lead within their capabilities |
| Walkers are exposed to unnecessary risks |
| **Too many**  **people walking**  **in the group** | Leaders are stressed and overwhelmed | * Leaders refer to recommended ratios and manage group size depending on the specific circumstances Identify additional helpers (e.g. walk assistant, co-leader or backmarker) for large groups * Advertise any limits on group size (and booking information, if needed) in advance * Where needed, limit invitations to people with a specific shared experience (e.g. women-only walks, cancer support groups) |
| Walkers are exposed to unnecessary risks |
| Walkers act recklessly | Walkers put themselves and others at risk | * Share information with walkers in advance to establish clear expectations and responsibilities * Give a walk briefing before setting off, to share your plan and expectations * Communicate with walkers throughout the walk |
| Leaders are stressed and overwhelmed |

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| What are the risks or hazards? | What could happen and who could be harmed? | **How we manage the risks** |
| Weather | Walkers are exposed to extreme cold, heat, or wet | * Check the weather before the walk * Let people know what to wear and what to bring * Make contingency plans * Set an appropriate pace and take breaks as needed * Stay alert to changing conditions and adjust plans accordingly |
| Getting lost | Walkers get lost | * Where possible, recce the route a week or so in advance – or carefully plan with good local knowledge, guidebooks and/or maps * Leaders are familiar with the route and contingency plans in case changes are |
| Walkers are exposed to extreme cold, heat or wet |
| Terrain | Walkers trip or fall, resulting in injury | * Leaders complete training on Preventing & Managing Incidents * Check for muddy/slippery/steep sections when planning * Advise walkers of terrain and suitable footwear in advance * Make contingency plans, to draw on if needed * Zig-zag up/down any steep sections * Offer reassurance to nervous walkers & take adequate breaks * Adjust plans on the walk if needed |
| Unsafe/unstable geographic features or obstacles (e.g., water, tides, rock fall, overhangs, and fallen trees) | Walkers trip or fall, resulting in injury | * Follow any local warnings or signs and advise walkers to keep away from sheer drops/edges * Check paths are suitable for a group to use safely and make changes if necessary * Make contingency plans to deal with unexpected features and obstacles * Avoid crossing any significant water features – use bridges or other recognised water crossing points * Check the tide times |
| Walkers get into difficulty and drown |

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| What are the risks or hazards? | What could happen and who could be harmed? | **How we manage the risks** |
| Livestock | Walkers are at risk  of injury from livestock | * Cross fields with livestock calmly and quietly, keeping the group together and any dogs on a short lead (releasing the dog if charged by cows) * Follow the Countryside Code (England & Wales) and Scottish Outdoor Access Code (Scotland) * Leave gates and property as you find them |
| Property is damaged |
| The wider public are at risk of injury from escaped livestock |
| Roads | Walkers are at risk of road traffic accident | * Maintain single file on any road sections without footpath/pavement * Plan route to avoid busy roads where possible * Check for suitable crossing places |
| Other road users are at risk of accident |
| Losing walkers | Walkers could get left behind/lost | * Leader knows who is on the walk – asking for names and emergency contact details * Regular headcounts and communication with the group * Appoint a backmarker * Communicate with group throughout the walk |
| Accident or medical emergency | Walkers require first aid or medical attention | * Leader knows who is on the walk – asking for names and emergency contact details * Ask walkers to complete and carry an In Case of Emergency (ICE) card * Leaders complete training on Preventing & Managing Incidents * Know how to contact the emergency services * Ensure mobile phone is fully charged, and consider carrying a power bank * Carry a first aid kit – and extra supplies/layers to keep people comfortable while waiting for help to arrive * Ensure appropriate first aid awareness and skills amongst the group |
| Walkers with specific health conditions/needs | Leaders are stressed and walkers are exposed to unnecessary risks | * Ask walkers to get in touch in advance to find out more about the walk and whether it is suitable * Explain that leaders cannot provide specialist support for individuals with specific health conditions/needs * Ask a carer, family member or friend to accompany the walker if appropriate * Work in partnership with other specialist services/organisations to provide guidance * Create a safe, private space at the start of the walk for anyone to share any additional information they would like to * Ask walkers to complete and carry an In Case of Emergency (ICE) card |
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