Strenuous and Technical 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 * Leaders have additional skills for the conditions (e.g. advanced navigation, winter mountain skills, avalanche awareness) * 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 |
| 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 |
| Weather | Walkers are exposed to extreme cold, heat, or wet | * Check the weather before the walk * If relevant, check the avalanche forecast 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, extremes of temperature and adjust plans accordingly |

Strenuous and Technical walks continued.

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| What are the risks or hazards? | What could happen and who could be harmed? | **How we manage the risks** |
| 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 needed * Ensure appropriate navigation skills in the group for the walk and possible conditions * Pre-register phone with 999 emergency text service * Know the hours of dusk and darkness, and plan accordingly * Carry relevant kit – for example a whistle, headtorch and emergency shelter for more remote walks * On more remote walks, complete a Route Card in advance and leave a copy with a designated Emergency Point of Contact (EPOC) – “late back procedure” should be implemented by the EPOC if needed |
| Walkers are exposed to extreme cold, heat or wet |
| There is a communications blackout |
| Walkers run low on food/drink supplies |
| 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 in response to the group & conditions * Zigzag up/down any steep sections – highlight benefits of walking poles * Offer reassurance to nervous walkers & take adequate breaks * Remain the group to stay hydrated and carry high-energy snacks * 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 * Ensure appropriate navigation skills in the group to re-route and navigate around any challenging or unexpected features * Avoid crossing any significant water features – use bridges or other recognised water crossing points * Check the tide times |
| Walkers get into difficulty and drown |

Strenuous and Technical walks continued.

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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 |
| Roads (driving) | Road traffic accident puts walkers and other road users at risk of injury | * Remind walkers that the drive to/from the walk is often the riskiest part of the day * Remind drivers to take care, take adequate rests on longer journeys and maintain fluid/blood sugar levels at the end of the day |
| 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 * Have a back-up plan for areas without mobile phone signal (emergency beacon/GPS) * Carry a first aid kit – and extra supplies/layers to keep people warm and comfortable while waiting for help to arrive * Ensure appropriate first aid awareness and skills amongst the group |
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