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
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| 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
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| 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
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| 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
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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
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| 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
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| 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
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| 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
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| 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
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| 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
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| 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
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| 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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