



Introduction

In drawing up this guide, we've aimed to set out some simple guidelines for walk and other outdoor event leaders to help make things go as smoothly and safely as possible without making it all too officious. Hopefully we've got the balance right.

The guide is aimed principally at those leading walks but much of the advice will be relevant to other outdoor events.

Planning the route

- ❑ Keep to public rights of way/access land
- ❑ Keep close to the advertised distance/grading & description
- ❑ When working out the timing, 2mph is a useful guide to the average walking speed
- ❑ Check the suitability of the start point for car-parking and work out how long it will take to get there from the Museum
- ❑ When planning to stop at a pub/café bear in mind that you might not be able to eat your own food there

Check out the route beforehand

- ❑ **Where possible you should walk the route beforehand** – it is much more difficult to change course with a group in tow
- ❑ In the interests of safety try and find someone to go with you when you check out the route. If heading into a remote area leave details of your intended route and time of return with a third party.
- ❑ Bear in mind the potential risks as you check out the route and be prepared to consider alternative routes

Know your own limitations

- ❑ Leading a walk in thick cloud, fog, snow or ice requires skill, particularly in mountainous terrain. Mountainous areas can be dangerous even in good weather or conditions may change while you are up there – good map reading skills are essential.
- ❑ If you do not have the experience and/or training required, do not attempt to lead such walks. **Always keep within your capabilities.**

Unable to lead the walk/event?

- ❑ If (*for any reason*) you are unable to lead the walk, please inform the programme secretary (or another Committee Member) a.s.a.p.

Carry out a risk assessment

- ❑ **Risk assessments must be completed for all events involving (or likely to involve) children and are desirable for all events**
- ❑ We're not expecting any in-depth analysis here – rather a quick and simple assessment, designed to highlight any significant risks and what action to take to avoid or minimise them. It should act as a useful prompt to advise people on what to expect on the walk.
- ❑ You should have already received a copy of the risk assessment proforma (and guidance notes) - it can also be downloaded from the COG website www.cardiffoutdoorgroup.org.uk on the members resources page

- ❑ Please read the guidance notes on the form before starting the risk assessment. If still in doubt on how to complete the assessment please contact a Committee Member for advice.
- ❑ All significant/serious hazards should be included
- ❑ After the walk/event please return the completed risk assessment to the Group's secretary – email secretary@cardiffoutdoorgroup.org.uk

Weather

- ❑ Check the local weather forecast before starting the walk. It may be necessary to change plans or cancel. Be prepared to cut the walk short if conditions deteriorate.
- ❑ **Always be prepared to change the route in the interests of safety**

What to take with you

Essential

- ❑ **A 1:25,000 map of the area**
- ❑ Compass
- ❑ Watch
- ❑ Basic First Aid kit
- ❑ Mobile phone (& coins for phoning in case the mobile is out of range)
- ❑ Waterproofs, food, drink

Advisable

(especially for more strenuous/remote walks or in winter conditions)

- ❑ Torch
- ❑ Whistle
- ❑ Survival bag
- ❑ Emergency food & water supplies (enough for own use and others if required)

At the meeting point (Usually the Museum)

Bad weather

- ❑ The decision on whether to change the route/location or cancel the walk is at the discretion of the walk leader.
- ❑ If cancelling the walk you must still go to the museum in case anyone turns up

Before leaving the Meeting point

- ❑ Make sure that everyone knows you
- ❑ Count the number of people participating
- ❑ Give a brief outline of the walk to everyone including the expected terrain and conditions and highlight any significant hazards (based on the information within the risk assessment).
- ❑ Check that everyone has appropriate footwear/equipment/food/water
- ❑ If you feel that someone is not fit enough or not adequately prepared to do the walk, you have the discretion to refuse to take them
- ❑ Arrange transport for everyone to the start of the walk and count the number of cars.
- ❑ Give out your mobile phone number.
- ❑ Make sure someone in each car knows where they are going and how to get there

During the walk

Before starting out

- ❑ Wait until all the cars/people leaving the meeting point have arrived
- ❑ Count the number of people on the walk – some people may have joined here without going to the meeting point

- ❑ If anyone has joined here, repeat the information given at the Meeting point about the walk
- ❑ If you have more than 15 people in the group, pick someone to bring up the rear and make sure everyone knows who this is. (This doesn't have to be the same person for the whole walk). Ideally this person should have a map and know the route of the walk.
- ❑ Make sure that everyone knows where you are heading

On the walk itself

- ❑ Be aware of the speed of the slowest person and keep an eye out to make sure that everyone is keeping up with you
- ❑ Make regular head counts to make sure that no-one is missing, particularly when restarting after a break or when you change direction
- ❑ Don't allow the group to become too spread out. If this happens you are more likely to lose people. Also if someone gets into difficulty there may be no-one around to help them.
- ❑ Ensure that dogs are kept on leads where appropriate
- ❑ Point out hazards/risks as necessary as you come up to them e.g. warning of a busy road, boggy ground etc.
- ❑ If stopping to allow stragglers to catch up, give the last arrivals time to rest before starting again
- ❑ Keep an eye on the time and be prepared to speed up if necessary
- ❑ Ensure that you have refreshment stops as appropriate during the day as well as a lunch stop

- ❑ Leave all gates as you found them
- ❑ If some people want to break away from the group to take an alternative route, provide them with advice if you can but make them aware that they are taking full responsibility for their own safety. *(Bear in mind that this might affect the transport arrangements for the return journey)*

If something goes wrong

- ❑ Be prepared to stop, rethink and take advice
- ❑ **In an emergency ring 999** and briefly state the facts – any decision on whether to contact mountain rescue (or the coastguard/cliff rescue) will be taken by the emergency services – they can't be contacted directly
- ❑ In case of an accident follow the order of events below:
 - Look after your own safety then
 - The safety of the rest of the group
 - Assess the situation
 - Dial 999
 - If no immediate phone available, send 2 people to phone for help
- ❑ If you suspect **hypothermia** – symptoms – *stumbling, shivering involuntarily, uncharacteristically quiet or noisy/violent* – stop and call mountain rescue and stay put. Use survival bags/clothes to stabilise the casualty.

And finally
Enjoy your walk/event

