

Footloose 303

Risk assessment / Advice sheet / Check list for: Reccyng of country and coast walks

Who might be harmed by the hazard / risk?

You as the person carrying out the reccy and anyone who is with you. However, in a few limited cases it may be third parties e.g. car drivers.

Remember that one of the prime purposes for a reccy is to make sure the final route is safe and that any hazards on the actual walk can be managed e.g. road crossings. Make notes if necessary to remind yourself when you come to do the actual walk. Judge the level of risk, if is un-acceptable change the route. If you are unsure seek advice.

Insurance note

The group's insurance covers walk reccys. You do not need to inform the walks co-ordinator that you are carrying out a reccy but you must take reasonable measures to protect yourself and those helping you.

Risk or hazard	What to do to reduce risk	Leader's check
<i>What to take with you / do before the walk</i>		
Your route takes you onto high exposed ground and / or more than 30 minutes from habitation or a main road.	This is classed as a mountain or moorland walk which have higher risk and hazards. Do not plan to reccy this type of walk unless you have the skills and equipment to do so. If in doubt contact Mike W, Steve H or John W before you proceed any further. Contact numbers on GroupSpaces.	
Walking alone and having an accident or getting significantly lost.	Arrange for at least one person to come with you if possible. If you cannot you must make sure you use a buddy who knows where you are going and when you should be back. Only walk alone if you are experienced or know the area well. Having help is far safer and more enjoyable.	
Getting lost / Not knowing where you are in an emergency	Take map and compass with you and know how to use them The group has maps and GPS units for loan. Take a GPS with you and know how to use it (they are set up so it is easy to get a grid reference). Very cheap grid ref apps are available for smart phones, have one know how to use it. Do not try to navigate with a GPS or smart phone, use them to help.	
Too many people on a reccy with you. It is difficult to navigate, look for hazards and manage several people.	The ideal number for a reccy is three as in an emergency such as a non-mobile injury it is easier for two people to manage the situation, in particular if you cannot fetch help by mobile phone. Do not reccy with large groups of walkers.	
You under estimate the difficulty of the walk and have problems.	Measure the length and allow for navigational errors and alterations to the route Study the map and / or guide and judge how hilly / hard the walk is. This should include how rough under foot if possible. If you are unsure about the route or your navigation ability seek help from another member before the walk.	

Risk or hazard	What to do to reduce risk	Leader's check
An emergency occurs – what to do?	Print off and take with you the group's emergency procedure. Have your map with you and know how to take a grid reference.	
Medical emergency	Take your first aid kit with you.	
May need to contact the emergency services	Take your mobile phone and make sure it is charged. Register your phone for SMS emergency use. See advice sheet on website. Take a pen and paper with you.	
Weather risk. Extreme cold; wet or heat.	Check the weather forecast the day before the walk. Make sure that you have all your kit and supplies ready and with you.	
Possible danger of cattle / horses acting aggressively towards dogs and walkers.	If you have a dog make sure you can manage it and make sure you have remind yourself of the group guidance issued on dogs and stock	
On the walk		
Walker not properly equipped	Make sure that those helping are properly equipped	
Walker(s) having significant difficulty due to fitness / illness.	Keep an eye on those walking. Adjust the pace of the walk or have more stops. Cut short the walk / seek help if necessary.	
Walker having significant difficulty due to weather (hot, cold or wet)	Hot weather; stop in shade and assess situation. Cold and or wet; share kit, help out. Cut short reccy if necessary.	
Slips or falls	The group's advice sheet makes footwear with a good grip an essential requirement. When walking pick your way over the ground to avoid the most difficult / slippery ground. Bear this in mind for the actual walk	
Illness or accident	Put the emergency procedure into action. Seek help from others on walk or nearby.	
Ticks and Lymes Disease	Group has published advice on website	
Accident when crossing or walking on roads and lanes	Take particular care and be prepared. Walk in single file and in a way vehicles can see you well in advance (generally on the right hand side) - on sharp, right hand, bends it may be necessary to change sides. On narrow lanes hold into recess / wide area to allow vehicles to pass, especially tractors and the like.	
Cattle or horses on route acting in an aggressive manner.	Walk around, not through, the stock. In particular do not walk between cows and calves. Holding ground and holding out arms can keep herds of bullocks back. Be prepared; have in mind an escape route from field.	
Increased danger of cattle / horses acting aggressively where dogs are with you.	Dogs to be on a lead but owner should release dog if stock is very aggressive. Find alternative route if situation warrants it.	
Loss of light. This is a particular risk during the winter or on an evening walk.	When planning your route take care about timing and know when sunset will be. Remember that reccyng can take a longer than the actual walk, plan accordingly. Take a good head torch with you (other walkers are asked to carry torches or head torches)	

Risk or hazard	What to do to reduce risk	Leader's check
<i>After the walk</i>		
Any near incidents or near misses	Report these back to the group's H&S committee rep (see GroupSpaces for name and contact details). By doing this the group learns and can improve the way it works.	
	<i>Well done! You are now well prepared to lead the actual walk. Thank you for all your efforts.</i>	

Version 1 - 30 June 2016