



SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR WALK LEADERS

Please follow this guidance, so we all enjoy the walk. Need help or advice? Ask a committee member.

Equipment

- Make sure you are properly equipped – see the NOG – Safety Advice for Walkers document.
- Make sure that all those on the walk are properly equipped.

Before the Walk

- Unless you are an experienced leader, please walk the route in advance to check that you know the route and to assess any particular safety hazards.
- Grade the walk – Easy/Moderate/Strenuous and if accompanied children (under 18) are permitted.
- Inform NOG members, before the walk, by email and at NOG event(s) of:
 - A brief advertising sentence, describing/selling the event
 - Meeting time and place
 - The walk starting point, address, W3W
 - The length, grade, difficulty, terrain and the equipment needed
 - Refreshments available en route or food/drink to take on the walk
 - Likely break/toilet stops if applicable
 - Who to contact for further information
 - Dogs – if they are permitted
- Complete the NOG risk assessment form.

On the Day of the Walk

- Make an assessment of the weather at least two hours before the walk commences and decide if the walk should proceed or be cancelled. If you decide to cancel the walk, inform the walk organiser.
- Inform the walkers, before leaving Newport or the hostel, of the relevant information above.
- Ask all participants if they are happy to have their photograph taken and put on social media and take note of any walker(s) saying no.
- Assess whether all walkers are properly equipped and whether they are capable of completing the walk.
 - If the answer is no to either question, you should suggest that they do not come on the walk.
 - If it is a mountain or other serious walk, you should politely *insist* that the walker does not come on the walk.
 - An ill-equipped walker, or one who is barely capable of completing the walk, could endanger everyone on the walk.
 - Welcome any new walkers and ask for their surname, relevant medical information and emergency contact details.
- Before starting walking, remind the walkers to:

- shut all gates,
- not go too far ahead of the leader,
- inform the leader if someone wants to leave the walk before the end and if someone wants to 'disappear behind a bush'.
- AND inform walkers of the high and medium risks of the risk assessment.
- Perform a count of all walkers at the *start*, at the *end* and at stages during the walk.
 - Appoint a 'back marker' if there are more than, say, 15 walkers.
 - Make sure you can account for all walkers throughout the walk.
 - If a walker is missing, stop the walk & enquire if anyone has contact details for the lost person(s). If not, Norman Roberts has NOG members' phone numbers. If you are unable to contact them, establish the last time & place the lost person(s) was seen. Re-trace steps to the last contact point & search for a small distance any alternative routes or places they may have gone. If they are untraceable, complete the walk and if their car is still present (assuming this is known) when the walk is complete, notify local police and their emergency contact person. Norman, plus walk organisers, will have access to emergency contact names/numbers.
- Monitor progress of the walkers during the walk.
 - E.g. Is someone having difficulties; is the group spread out too far; how are new members doing?
- Consider altering your plans in the light of events, etc.
 - E.g. If the weather becomes extreme during the walk (e.g. heavy snow or high winds) consider a safer alternative route if possible or abandon the walk & take the safest route back to the start. Be aware of walkers' safety and possible effects of exposure, e.g. hypothermia.
 - E.g. if the walk is likely to finish very late.
- You have authority, as the leader of the walk.
 - If a dog presents a particular hazard, e.g. during lambing time, you can tell a walker not to bring the dog on the walk.
 - If walkers disagree with the route, you can continue with your planned walk, unless conditions deteriorate or there is some other hazard.
 - However, do accept constructive advice and help.
 - Consider altering your plans if, for example, the weather turns bad.
- Deal with walker/general public disputes – If a conflict or confrontation occurs, ask them to remain calm and take time out for a moment. Remind them to be respectful of each other and the walk leader. If necessary, briefly mediate the points of view, away from the group, so the walk can continue. If an agreement cannot be reached, then ask them to agree to differ but be civil & sensible. Report details of the incident to the walk organiser.
- If a walker(s) wants to leave the walk, make it plain that they become solely responsible for their own safety.
- Take regular breaks and choose the best available places for stops.

- E.g. in the shade if it is very hot, in a sheltered place in the winter or in bad weather.
- Walk at a pace such that the walkers keep together.
 - Over the whole walk, it is necessary to walk at the pace of the *slowest* walker.
 - In mist or fog it is important to keep the walkers close together.
 - If someone goes too far ahead, ask him/her to stay close to the group.
- Follow the Highway Code when walking on roads.
 - See the NOG – Safety Advice for Walkers document. Ensure its advice is followed.
 - NOG has ‘hi-vis’ waistcoats; take at least 2 on the walk, one for the front and one for the back of the group.
 - Torches are essential equipment for the whole of Greenwich Mean Time and in the early or late periods of British Summer Time.
- Engage with new walkers – Make a point of chatting to any newcomers. Explain some background to the group. Enquire how they became aware of the group and make them aware of the website/FB if they have not seen it.
- Try to avoid or minimise walking on busy roads that do not have a pavement.
- Action any accident as appropriate:
 - Administer basic first aid. (See British Red Cross mobile app if this is accessible on your smartphone.)
 - If required, call for emergency assistance. (Dial 999 or 112 for general emergency, 101 for Police or 111 for NHS advice.)
 - Help any injured party to the end of the route if necessary or, if unable to continue, help them arrange safe transport back to start point & home. This may involve organising a taxi or for someone to be waiting to collect them after returning to the start.
 - Consider abandoning the walk if necessary. The safety of everyone is the first priority.
 - Report the incident to the NOG secretary by phone/email at the earliest opportunity.
- Action any incident involving damage to property or to other parties by discussing with the walk organiser.

When the Walk has Ended

- Ask for feedback at the end of the walk – pace/interest/length and how it compared with the details provided.
- Provide feedback to the walk organiser of any accidents, incidences or near misses.
- Complete the NOG risk assessment form. This is to be submitted to the safety officer/walk organiser/committee member by email.