

General Guidelines for Walk Leaders

All leaders must be paid up members of the Ramblers Association and consequently covered by RA Civil Liability Insurance.

The meeting point for Tuesday and Saturday walks is Chester Avenue (unless stated differently in the Area News). The walk leader (or his/her delegate) should attend at Chester Avenue at the appointed time to allow car sharing to take place, and direct members to the starting point of the walk. The meeting point for the Wednesday evening walks is at the start of the walk, as per walk listings or area news updates.

Walk leaders may give a start location to people wishing to go directly to the walk start point. An enquiry about the start point should not be interpreted as definite attendance.

It should be noted that walks can only be cancelled in exceptional circumstances. Contingency plans should be brought into play to cover for exceptional bad weather or personal emergencies.

Walkers are expected to take responsibility for their own safety and welfare. However, you should take common sense precautions for the safety of self and the group.

You should carry:- First aid kit, waterproofs, survival blanket, compass, appropriate maps for the area, mobile phone (fully charged), fluorescent jacket and emergency food rations.

Reconnoitre the walk (Recce) to:-

Check car parking facility and obtain any permission that may be required.

Note Toilet availability.

Check timings for full walk duration and rest / lunch stops.

Ensure the route is clear of obstacles and be aware of any hazards that may be encountered.

Report any obstructions found during a walk to a footpath officer, or preferably to the LCC website... "Report It"...Public footpath section.

In the event of no other option but cancellation, the leader, or leader's nominee should attend the meeting point (Chester Avenue) to clarify the situation.

Your role as a walk leader

Planning your walk, things to consider:-

The length, duration and difficulty of the walk should be within the published guidelines;

Day	Miles (approx)	Max. Duration	Nature of walk
Saturday Full day	10	6hrs	Easy to difficult
Tuesday Full day	8	5hrs	Easy to moderate
Tuesday Half day	4-5	3hrs	Easy to moderate
Wednesday Evening	3-4	3hrs	Easy to moderate

If possible you should provide points of interest during the walk, historic events, interesting natural features, etc.

Ensure that the terrain is suitable for the type of walk being undertaken.

Consider "back up" plans or alternative routes to accommodate any emergency situation.

Check the route for mobile phone coverage.

At the start of the walk gather all group members together for a walk briefing:-

Appoint a back marker. Exchange mobile phone numbers with your back marker and ensure a whistle is available for use to attract the leader's attention. Fluorescent vests are advisable to provide increased visibility.

It is particularly important to ensure that the back marker is fully aware of the intended route and any deadlines to be met, train/ bus connections for example.

Give your name and the name of the back marker and welcome any new members or visitors from other regions.

Provide an outline of the route and note key

points of interest.

Highlight any cautionary aspects for the route, hazards, and unclear deviations from the footpath.

Ask the group not to go ahead of the leader so that the pace and wellbeing of the group is not compromised.

Stress that anyone leaving the group should make the leader and/or the back marker aware.

Brief the group with instructions on what to do if anyone should become separated from the group.

"Do not deviate from the route. Wait at the spot where you were last in contact with the full group. Members of the main group will retrace their steps to find any missing person."

Check with the group as to whether there are any medical issues that the leader needs to be aware of. (A quiet confidential discussion should be offered).

Bad weather, adverse conditions, path closure/dangerous obstacles for example; the safety of the whole group is paramount.

In the event of a group member becoming unwell, or unable to continue on the walk a clear set of actions should be implemented and communicated to all walk members.

For a person who feels the need for a short rest to recover, a brief rest period should be called for all of the group until the person feels well enough to continue.

In the event of a person feeling unwell and being unable to continue with the walk, two people should remain with that person until a satisfactory outcome has been reached. A decision will have to be taken as to whether it is safe to see the person to a means of transport home, or whether external assistance is required.

If external assistance is required a mobile phone call to 112 should be made to contact the appropriate emergency services.

It is possible that the location has a weak mobile phone signal in which case it may be necessary to send a message to 112 by text.

Count the members make everyone aware of the group numbers before setting out on the walk.

On the walk

Be aware of pace, with particular attention to anyone who has declared a need for consideration.

Share points of interest and keep an eye on the group progress as a whole.

Be vigilant at road crossings and stiles to ensure the group does not become separated.

Take care at junctions in paths to ensure all group members take the correct route.

Stay in regular contact with the back marker to ensure the wellbeing of the group.

Note any obstructions or hazards on the walk and forward a note to the Footpath Secretary.

Be prepared for the unexpected

Be prepared to implement route deviation and contingency plans for unexpected events.

The phone needs to be registered for this purpose. (Send a text to 112 "register" and reply to response with "yes")

It is important that a clear location reference is given, along with a clear narrative of the emergency.

It is acknowledged that all situations can be different and that they may be dealt with in different ways. The application of common sense, along with the support and cooperation of the group, is a key factor in managing the unexpected.

At the end of the walk

Ensure there is a report available for any instances or events outside of normal activity. (An incident report form can be obtained from the Ramblers web site, or the Group secretary. Completed report forms should be submitted to the Group secretary.

Report the walk numbers to the Secretary.

Thank all members for their participation.

