

Chilterns Weekend Walkers

Wellbeing, easy access and easy walks

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.

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 • Peer support available from more experienced leaders • Leaders only lead within their capabilities
	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 • Where needed, limit invitations to people with a specific shared experience (e.g. women-only walks, cancer support groups)
	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
	Leaders are stressed and overwhelmed	

Ramblers wellbeing walks, easy access and easy walks (continued)

What are the risks or hazards?	What could happen and who could be harmed?	How we manage the risks
Weather	Walkers are exposed to extreme cold, heat, or wet	• Check the weather 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 and adjust plans accordingly
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
	Walkers are exposed to extreme cold, heat or wet	
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 • Zig-zag up/down any steep sections • Offer reassurance to nervous walkers & take adequate breaks • Adjust plans on the walk if needed
Unsafe/unstable geographic features or obstacles (e.g., tides, floods, rockfall, 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 • Avoid crossing any significant water features – use bridges or other recognised water crossing points • Check the tide times
	Walkers get into difficulty and drown	

Ramblers wellbeing walks, easy access and easy walks (continued)

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
	Property is damaged	
	Public at risk of injury from escaped livestock	
Dogs	Walkers could be injured by a walker's dog	• Walk leader decides whether to allow dogs on the walk (in addition to assistance dogs) • Owner must keep dog under close control
Red kites	Walkers could be injured by birds, especially when stopping for snacks	• Warn walkers to watch for kites, especially when stopping for snacks • Keep food out of sight when not eating and never feed red kites • If possible sit against a tree or wall when eating
Roads	Walkers at risk of accidents	• Maintain single file on any road sections without footpath/pavement • Plan route to avoid busy roads where possible • Check for suitable crossing places
	Other road users are at risk of accidents	
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 throughout the walk • Appoint a backmarker
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 • Carry a first aid kit – and extra supplies/layers to keep people comfortable while waiting for help to arrive • Ensure appropriate first aid awareness and skills among the group
Walkers with specific health conditions/needs	Leaders are stressed and walkers are exposed to unnecessary risks	• Ask walkers to get in touch in advance to find out more about the walk and whether it is suitable • Explain that leaders cannot provide specialist support for individuals with specific health conditions/needs • Ask a carer, family member or friend to accompany the walker if appropriate • Work in partnership with other specialist services/organisations to provide guidance • Create a safe, private space at the start of the walk for anyone to share any additional information

		• Ask walkers to complete and carry an In Case of Emergency (ICE) card
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