

Trafford Walkers
Safe Walking Policy

Introduction

This document sets out the rights and responsibilities of both walkers and leaders and the basic rules for the conduct of walks carried out as official walks approved by the committee of Trafford Walkers.

These principles, rights and responsibilities are considered by the committee to be the minimum to ensure safe and pleasant walking.

Walkers

- **Walkers must ensure that they are properly equipped with**
 - walking boots that have good ankle support and soles with good grip suitable for the terrain.
 - good quality socks to ensure warmth and the avoidance of blisters;
 - waterproof jacket and over trousers;

- **The following are recommended:**
 - Gaiters in moorland/boggy areas, and snow.
 - Walking poles on rough, uneven tracks and on steep climbs and descents.
 - In winter conditions: warm under layers of light synthetic/wool material should be worn, avoiding cotton/cotton mixtures. Denims should never be worn as they hold water and take a long time to dry out.
 - Wear hats/gloves scarves similarly of synthetic/wool material. It is recommended that a spare pair of gloves is carried, and a head torch in winter.
 - In extreme summer conditions, cover head, neck and shoulders and carry sun protection.

- **Walkers are responsible for:**
 - carrying their own food and drink with warm drinks in winter and adequate water in hot weather.
 - any medication specific to their own needs (though the leader will carry a basic first aid kit).
 - informing the leader of any potentially disabling medical conditions prior to the walk.
 - familiarising themselves with the detailed walk description and, in the light of this, consider their own fitness level/experience and ability in relation to the distance/expected weather conditions/total ascents/descents and the general

walking environment. When in doubt, walkers are advised to contact the leader prior to the walk.

- staying behind the leader and keeping him/her visible at all times, and closing up any gaps especially in bad weather, in poor visibility, and in woodland or forest.
- following the route prescribed by the leader, and not taking short cuts; also, following the direction of the leader, particularly when walking on and crossing roads and observing footpaths especially where crops are evident and animals grazing; when crossing fields of crops, walkers must walk in single file.

- **Walkers' general conduct**

- Walkers owe a duty of care to fellow walkers, landowners and members of the public and should avoid any action or omission which may cause reasonably foreseeable injury, loss or damage to another. Walkers must not interfere with any farming equipment or property.

Leaders

Responsibilities of Leaders

- **The Leader must:**

- reconnoitre the whole walk in advance of leading it with walkers (It is permissible to reconnoitre the walk in sections providing the whole walk is covered).
- note appropriate rest stops, shelter stops and, where necessary, escape routes.
- provide an accurate description of the walk (distance, severity, terrain, paths etc) for distribution to members.
- provide accurate travel directions to the start of the walk and complete an attendance list of members and guests on the walk, and take the list with them.
- carry an appropriate map of the walk area, whistle, first-aid kit (available from the Membership Secretary), and compass.
- be familiar with the latest weather forecast for the area and be prepared to cancel, re-route or shorten the walk if conditions require it.
- be aware of emergency contact numbers and know the procedures to be followed in the case of an emergency. *See page 3.*

- **The walk must be conducted according to the following principles:**

- A leader is entitled to refuse participation on a walk if a walker is considered improperly or insufficiently dressed or equipped for the terrain/weather.
- Before the walk commences, a short introduction should be given, outlining any particular hazards, ascents or descents and where caution is required. An appropriate backmarker should be appointed.
- Participants will walk under the direction of the walk leader.
- In liaison with the backmarker, regular checks should be made throughout the walk
- The pace of the walk should be compatible with the pace of the slowest walker; it is not possible to be definitive about this but, in general, if walkers are reasonably fit and experienced and terrain is moderate, a pace of 2—2.5 miles per hour is normally practical; slower walkers should be allowed sufficient time for rest and recovery before the group moves on.
- The leader and backmarker should endeavour to keep in visual/audible contact throughout the walk.
- The backmarker should close all relevant gates when walkers have passed through and must inform the leader if any walker leaves the group or is in difficulty.
- When walking on roads, walkers should be instructed to walk ‘tight right’ and in single file unless the leader deems otherwise in the interests of safety.
- The walk will not be amended such that it departs from the walk description provided unless weather conditions dictate it or there are obstacles or danger on the path.

Club Emergency Guidelines

- **Introduction.**

A number of different events and circumstances can bring about an emergency on a walk. The procedures below cover the main points.

Risk assessment is the identification of hazards, and their potential for harm if the worst occurs and taking steps to reduce the likelihood of that happening.

In the event of an emergency occurring on a walk the following procedures should be followed when and where appropriate under the direction of the leader..

- **Emergency procedures**

- In the event of an emergency, the leader should ensure that the group is in the safest position possible.

- From a mobile phone dial 999 or the EU standard of 112 and ask for the **police** giving details of your location, the nature of the problem and the names of those present. The police will then contact the relevant mountain rescue team. It is important to remember that if your mobile phone does not appear to have a signal, 999/112 will seek out another provider.
- The whistle is used for the International Mountain Distress Signal which is 6 good blasts on the whistle followed by a minute's silence, and then repeated. The answer call is 3 good blasts followed by a minutes silence, then repeated. Both signals can be made using other methods such as flashing a torch, shouting 'Help', or waving a bright object.
- An injured or ill person not in need of rescue must be accompanied back to base by two capable members
- A seriously ill person may be carrying medication that they require.
- Stop serious bleeding by applying pressure and raising the injured part if it is a limb; keep the patient warm and dry, and conscious if possible.
- The general state of the rest of the group can deteriorate in emergency conditions through cold, rain etc. It is important that the leader instruct the rest of the group to find shelter, or continue to lower ground in the shortest but safest route possible. A minimum of two people should stay with the injured party.
- In the event of extreme flooding, walkers will be instructed not to attempt to cross flooded areas/tidal estuaries if cut off by rising water but to remain on the highest available ground while the leader summons assistance.
- Where a walker is experiencing difficulty with the walk and there is a real risk to the safe of the rest of the group, the leader should instruct two appropriately experienced walkers to escort the distressed walker to a place of safety.
- If a walker is injured on a walk, an incident report must be completed and forwarded to the Secretary. All incidents whether deemed minor, serious or a near miss, or if outside assistance was or was not required, must then be forwarded by the Secretary to our insurers Perkins Slade immediately.
- When there is a sudden change in the weather to adverse conditions, it is the leader's responsibility to shorten or re-route the walk or return to base by the quickest and safest route.

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