

What?

- In England alone, more than 9 million of us walk recreationally at least once a month.
- Walking is not only free, it is a great way to improve and maintain both physical and mental health, as well as experiencing the natural world and having a chance to socialise.



Why?

- Walking is often seen as a gentle activity, but it does present many hazards, especially in the countryside where footpaths are more uneven than urban pavements, you may be in a remote location and weather conditions can deteriorate rapidly.
- Potential dangers and hazards include: slips trips and falls, negotiating stiles, barbed wire, fallen trees, damaged gates, blocked footpaths, trampling by cattle, getting lost and road traffic accidents.
- Good preparation, constant vigilance and flexibility to adjust plans according to the changing conditions is essential for safely leading a group walk in the countryside.



Do ✓

- ✓ Use pavements and off-road footpaths if possible
- ✓ Walk on the side of oncoming traffic in single file if walking on the roadside is unavoidable
- ✓ Use designated crossing points where possible
- ✓ Carry a map of the route and alternative routes planned if paths are blocked or impassable
- ✓ Give walking poles to those that use them
- ✓ Use staff/volunteers as front and back markers
- ✓ Carry waterproofs and extra layers or sun protection suited to the conditions on the day
- ✓ Ensure everyone has sufficient food and drink
- ✓ Carry throw ropes if walking near water
- ✓ Take extra care in icy and snowy weather

Don't ✗

- ✗ Don't attempt to walk routes that are beyond the ability of members in the group or set a pace that isn't achievable by the whole group
- ✗ Don't lead a walk without having planned a suitable route for all group members
- ✗ Don't walk for too long without comfort and refreshment breaks
- ✗ Don't forget to carry PI forms of all members of the walking group (including staff and volunteers)



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