

Ipswich Outdoor Group Walking Best-Practice Guidelines

Hazard	Example incidents	Before walk	During or after walk
<p>General planning considerations</p> <p>(See below for details of specific hazards)</p>	<p>(See below for specific incidents)</p>	<p>Leader: Carry out route assessment before the event. If practical, pre-walk the route; otherwise, study maps and other information.</p> <p>Leader: Advise walkers in advance (by email) of the type of terrain, length of walk, appropriate footwear and any relevant hazards.</p> <p>Leader: Either before walk or at the start, enquire if there is someone who is prepared to act as a backup leader.</p> <p>Leader: Be competent with map reading and navigation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring compass, map and mobile phone. - Set a suitable pace and stop regularly to allow everyone to catch up. Count people. <p>Everyone: If you are unsure if you can cope with the walk, then check with the leader.</p> <p>Everyone: Bring a mobile phone with you (if you have one). If you have a compass and map, bring them along.</p> <p>Everyone: Check weather forecast on the day and choose appropriate clothing.</p> <p>Everyone: If you are first-aid trained, let the leader know.</p>	<p>Leader: If there is an accident, then co-ordinate a call for emergency services (different phones will have different reception). If bad reception, then you may need to ask two people to go and call for help.</p> <p>Leader: If someone is injured, it may be necessary to split the group. This will depend upon the number of potential leaders and any first-aiders available.</p> <p>Everyone: Keep an eye out for each other and help the leader when you can.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep up with the group and do not wander off. - If you need to stop for the toilet, let someone know. <p>Everyone: If there is an accident, then help the leader by offering your mobile phone to call the emergency services.</p> <p>Everyone: Be prepared (if asked) to be a backup leader.</p> <p>Everyone: If the injured person cannot walk, then keep them warm until the emergency services arrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not move the injured person if there is a chance of back injury. - If the injured person can walk, then move to safety.

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Terrain: Roots, water courses, hidden obstructions, sudden drops, quarries, cliffs, flying golf balls	Trips, slips and falls, leading to sprains or broken limbs	Leader: Advise walkers in advance of possible terrain hazards.	Everyone: Keep away from the edge of cliffs or rivers. Keep an eye out for golfers “teeing off” in your direction!
Water: Sea, lakes, rivers, stagnant water	Falling, drowning, Weil’s disease (leptospirosis) from still water	Leader: Advise walkers of possible water hazards. - Check tides if required. - Avoid entering the water at all times. - Plan to cross rivers by bridges. - Cancel or re-route if conditions are bad.	Everyone: Wash hands after contact with stagnant water and before eating/drinking. Everyone: Contact G.P. if flu-like symptoms are experienced within two months and let G.P. know that there is a possibility of Weil’s disease.
Wet and/or windy weather: Heavy rain, strong winds, slippery surfaces, flooding	Exposure, injury from debris, swept off feet	Leader: Advise walkers of possible wet-weather hazards. - Cancel or re-route if conditions are bad. - Take into account the weather forecast, the number of walkers and how well equipped and fit they are. Everyone: Bring a waterproof top, trousers and gloves. Also, warm base layers of clothing may help.	Leader: Consider reversing route and going back. - Consider taking an alternative route back. - Consider taking shelter until conditions improve. Everyone: Let leader know if you are feeling particularly cold.

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Hot weather: Hot direct sun, high humidity, overall high temperature	Heatstroke, sunburn or dehydration	<p>Leader: Advise walkers to bring plenty of water and dress for hot weather.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have drink stops. - Plan a cooler shadier route (e.g. under trees). <p>Everyone: Carry enough water for the duration of the event (at least 2 litres recommended).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring sun cream, hat, sunglasses and appropriate clothing. 	<p>Leader: Find shade and have a break.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allow time for people to have a drink. <p>Leader: Walk can be shortened.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If there is a backup leader, then anyone feeling unwell could be led back to start. <p>Everyone: Let leader know if you are feeling particularly hot, dizzy or faint.</p>
Cold weather: Wind chill, icy under foot, snow covered gullies, sun reflection off snow	Losing footing and breaking bones, dehydration, snow blindness, sunburn, hypothermia	<p>Leader: Advise walkers to bring water and snacks and to dress for cold weather.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have drink and snack stops. - Plan alternative routes and areas of shelter. <p>Everyone: Wear warm clothing under waterproofs. Keep head covered and wear gloves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A walking stick/pole will help with balance in snow. - Sunglasses and water may be needed due to reflected light from snow. 	<p>Leader: Seek shelter and reassess route.</p> <p>Leader: Walk can be shortened or curtailed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If there is a backup leader, then anyone feeling unwell could be led back to start. <p>Everyone: Let leader know if you are feeling particularly cold or numb.</p>
Walkers getting lost/separated	Exposure, risk of hypothermia	<p>Leader: If there is a large group, then consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Splitting group into faster and slower groups. Select a suitable leader and check that they have map, compass and mobile phone. Agree the routes to be taken. (2) Having a backup leader at the rear. Check that they have map, compass and mobile phone. (3) Handing out copies of map, showing start, end and any meeting places. <p>Everyone: Let leader know you are coming, so they know if there is going to be a large group.</p>	<p>Leader: If you lose a person, retrace the route.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Call them on their mobile phone. - If dangerous conditions, call the emergency services. <p>Leader: On weekend trips, leave details of route, people count and estimated arrival time back at the hostel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure the hostel is aware of safe group return. <p>Everyone: Let the leader know if you want to leave the group. It will be your responsibility to get back.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Always let the leader and the hostel know you have arrived back safely.

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Road traffic: Walking along a road	Hit by a car	<p>Leader: Where possible, plan route to avoid walking on busy roads.</p> <p>Leader: Consider re-planning if route will require walking on roads at night. If night walking on roads will occur, then warn walkers.</p> <p>Everyone: If walking on roads at night, then bring torches and fluorescent tabards/jackets if you have them.</p>	<p>Everyone: Take care crossing roads.</p> <p>Everyone: If walking along a road, then walk facing the traffic and in single file.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use paths or verges whenever possible. - On sharp right-hand bends, walk on the left. - Avoid walking after dark. - If walking after dark is essential, then display torches at the front and rear. If you have them, wear fluorescent tabards/jackets.
Animals: Loose dogs, snakes, bulls, cattle, horses	Attacked, bitten or trampled	<p>Leader: Advise before walk if there is a known problem.</p> <p>Everyone: If a walker comes with a dog, then it <u>must</u> be kept on a lead. Animals have attacked the group due to dogs in the past.</p>	<p>Leader: Re-route around problems as they arise.</p> <p>Everyone: Keep to footpath.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wash bites in clean water and cover. Go to doctor after walk. - If anyone is bitten by a snake, contact the emergency services immediately. The victim must be kept still.
Insect bites or spores from ferns	Allergic reaction, Lyme's disease from ticks	<p>Leader: Advise before walk if there is a known problem. Thetford Forest is known for visitors catching Lyme's disease through tick bites.</p> <p>Everyone: Use insect repellent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep skin covered. - Avoid bracken where possible. 	<p>Everyone: Seek advice on how to remove the tick.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report tick bite to doctor within 24 hours. - If you were not aware that you had been bitten but develop a "target" rash, then visit your doctor as soon as possible.

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Medical or fitness conditions	Epileptic fit, heart attack, collapse due to exhaustion	<p>Leader: Ask anyone who has a medical or fitness condition to let you know privately before setting off.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss the condition with them and consider the suitability of the walk. Be prepared to tell them that it would be too risky to take them on the walk. -Ask if a backup leader is prepared to take them on some alternative easier walk if necessary. <p>Everyone: Let the leader know of any medical or fitness condition you have.</p> <p>Everyone: Bring any suitable medication with you and know how to use it.</p> <p>Everyone: Be aware that some walks may be particularly strenuous. The leader may feel that you are not suitable for a given walk. Try to accept this difficult situation with good grace.</p>	<p>Leader: Monitor individual/s and, if required, plan additional breaks or a shorter route.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You may need to split the group so a backup leader and the individual/s can go back. <p>Everyone: It is your responsibility to tell the group leader of any worsening of your medical or fitness condition. Work with the group leader to agree a suitable plan of action.</p>