

Wayfarers Good Practice Guide and Procedure Guidelines

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1 Introduction

The Wayfarers ¹ takes the safety of its members very seriously and has drawn up this document to provide a framework within which the club can be run safely. It is designed to allow the club to function within the guidelines of the Annual Risk Assessment, and has been compiled with reference to the resources listed in the bibliography section. These guidelines shall be reviewed regularly to ensure they are up to date.

The club is aware that the membership of the club possesses a wide range of skills and experience and aims to cater for all members in its activities. To ensure the safety of its members, the club will make trip and walk leaders aware of their responsibilities.

2 Regulation of Walks

All walks will be carried out in accordance with the Walk Procedure section.

2.1 The home contact

This requires that all walks are registered with a nominated home contact who is not taking part in the trip and will be in Birmingham for the duration of the trip. The purpose of the home contact is to provide a primary point of contact between the trip/walk leaders and the Guild if required.

Prior to departure, the home contact will be provided with the contact details of the trip leaders (eg mobile phone numbers), appropriate locational information on the trip (eg address of accommodation, area of visit), details of the members on the trip, and the method by which contact can be made with the Guild if needed.

The trip leaders will keep a copy of the information submitted to the home contact.

2.2 Guild paperwork

Prior to departure, the Guild will be supplied with the relevant trip details as listed in the Walk Procedure. This includes a risk assessment, contact details for the home contact, a duty of care form and other information as detailed in the Walk Procedure.

2.3 Unofficial trips

Any walks involving club members that are not run as official club trips are not subject to club administration or the Walk Procedure. Participants on such walks are not walking as members of the club, are not covered by club insurance and the club takes no responsibility for the people involved.

¹referred to as “the club” for the duration of this document

3 Leaders within the club

The club recognises two types of leader: Walk Leaders (Section 3.1) and Trip Leaders (Section 3.2). Each has separate responsibilities. The committee is responsible for ensuring that all leaders are appropriately trained, capable of the task and that they follow the practices laid down in this document.

All club activities in the outdoors are defined as being a trip. The appropriate number of Walk Leaders and Trip leaders must be assigned for each trip.

All leaders must be aware of their responsibilities and their applicability to the concept of Duty of Care.

3.1 Walk Leaders

The club recognizes these as volunteers in charge of the leading and planning of any walk. Walk leaders are expected to provide the highest standard of leadership and instruction as is reasonable in the circumstances.

3.1.1 Walk leader qualification criteria

To become a Walk Leader, a member must usually have satisfied the following criteria:

- Have completed both a navigation and group leading course run within the club. It is the responsibility of the committee to decide which of the current Walk Leaders are able to run these courses.
- Have read this document (the Good Practice and Procedures Guidelines).
- Have read the BMC Safety on Mountains booklet (see the bibliography).
- Have lead both a Level 1 and a Level 2 walk under the supervision of a current Walk Leader and carried out post walk analysis with that Walk Leader.

3.1.2 Additional desired criteria

It is highly desirable that all Walk Leaders possess a current First Aid certificate. A Walk Leader without a First Aid certificate must be accompanied on all walks by another member who has a First Aid certificate.

3.1.3 Maintaining Walk Leaders

To ensure that all Walk Leaders maintain their high levels, a program of refresher courses should be run. These refresher courses will consist of Walk Leaders and appropriate committee members focusing on leading issues. All Walk Leaders must attend a Birmingham based refresher course annually. It is also highly desirable that all Walk Leaders spend a day in the outdoors annually to back up the *compulsory* Birmingham based course.

The committee will maintain a register of all Walk Leaders and First Aiders.

3.1.4 The number of walk leaders on trips

Walk Leaders will be appointed for each walk according to the ratio rules stated below. A minimum of one leader is required for each walk, although at least two is recommended. Prospective Walk Leaders obtaining their supervised walk experience do not count as a full Walk Leader. All full Walk Leaders are jointly responsible for any safety decisions.

The ratio and number of Walk Leaders to Walkers must be:

- Level 1 walks (see 8.1) must have a Walk Leader : walker ratio of 1:8.
- Level 2 walks (see 8.2) must have a Walk Leader : walker ratio of 1:6.
- Walks that are deemed to be carried out under winter conditions must have a Walk Leader : walker ratio of 1:4.

3.1.5 Welfare of members

To ensure the safety of all members and to ensure that all members are aware of their responsibilities and the risks to which they are exposing themselves, the Walk Leader(s) should:

- Ensure that all walkers are suitably equipped and dressed. This will depend on the walk level and conditions. A typical kit list is provided in the Walk Procedure. If a walker is not appropriately equipped, then the leader must advise them of the safety implications and/or turn them away if appropriate.
- Brief all walkers at the start of the walk of the nature of the walk. This should include distance, ascent, terrain issues (eg steep ascent/descent), possible hazards (eg narrow ridges, exposed paths), weather conditions and any other relevant details.

3.1.6 The Walk Leader's responsibilities regarding accidents

Walk Leaders should only lead walks that they are happy to undertake based on their own experience and judgement. In order for a Walk Leader to be prepared to deal with an accident or emergency, Walk Leaders should:

- Ensure that at least one member on the club First Aid register is on the walk. This can include themselves.
- Ensure that Next of Kin details (index cards) are safely carried for every member of the group.
- Have the details of the home contact.
- Be aware of accident and emergency procedures.

- The planned route, postwalk meeting point, estimated time of arrival (ETA) and emergency declaration time (EDT) are communicated and agreed with the other Walk Leaders on the same trip as these will be the individuals that would normally raise an alarm and are best places to liaise with the emergency services and the home contact if needed.

In the case of an accident or a near miss on a walk, the Walk Leaders should report this back to the committee upon return to Birmingham. The details of the incident should also be entered in to the club incident book for future reference.

The club recognizes that Walk Leaders are potentially placed in liable situation and the club will take reasonable steps to ensure that Walk Leaders possess any appropriate additional insurance cover.

Walk Leaders will be aware that, although walkers are accepting a certain level of risk themselves, many may lack the necessary experience to undertake a reliable risk assessment and therefore may rely on the Walk Leaders' judgment. It should also be remembered that walkers may be in a new environment; Walk Leaders should not expect obvious precautions will be taken. A duty of care will exist.

3.1.7 The countryside and other walkers

Walk Leaders are responsible for ensuring the countryside is respected by all walkers in the group. This includes the Country Code, local access agreements and other local regulations.

3.2 Trip Leaders

3.2.1 Qualifications

There must be at least one Trip Leader on every trip. More than one is desirable. Trip leaders will be selected by the committee. Trip Leaders may also be Walk Leaders, but are not Walk Leaders by default.

3.2.2 Responsibilities

Trip Leaders should aim to ensure the smooth and enjoyable running of the trip for all members and that all tasks (eg cooking, cleaning) are shared fairly among all members on the trip. Trip Leaders provide the primary channel of communication between the trip and Birmingham, should the need to make contact arise.

They should also make sure they have up-to-date emergency contact information for all people on the trip.

3.2.3 Safety

Trip Leaders are responsible for the safety of all members on a trip when walks are not operating. The primary responsibility during walks rests on Walk Lead-

ers. However, it is stressed that at all times during the trip, all participants are responsible for their own actions as stated in section 4.

In the case of an accident or a near miss on a trip, the Trip Leaders should report this back to the committee upon return to Birmingham. The details of the incident should also be entered in to the club incident book for future reference.

4 Trip Participants

These will be members of the club who have been signed up in accordance with the Walk Procedure.

Although Walk and Trip Leaders are responsible for informing participants about the exact nature of a trip/walk; participants should be aware that they are responsible for their own actions, especially if they disregard the advice given by a Walk/Trip Leader. Participants must not take part in any activity they do not feel capable of carrying out in a safe, responsible manner.

All participants are expected to act appropriately on all trips so as to uphold the reputation of the club and ensure the safety of all members.

5 Training Courses

As the cost of training can be high, the committee must ensure that the appropriate members are selected for training. The benefit of further training for all members should not be underestimated and the club should encourage all members to further skills relevant to the club.

The club aims to organise the following training on a regular basis:

- Group management and navigation courses (internal)
- First Aid courses (external)
- Driver training courses (external)

6 Accident and Emergency Procedures

Despite taking all precautions, accidents can still occur. This section provides guidelines to ensure the optimum handling of a serious incident.

If a group has not returned from a walk by the prearranged emergency declaration time (EDT) the Walk Leaders not on the waylaid walk should begin to make contact with the group and/or alert the emergency services. The waylaid Walk Leader should also make efforts to contact the other groups to advise on appropriate action.

If a group encounters an emergency situation, the Walk Leader should also try, if feasible, to make contact with other Walk Leaders to advise them of the

situation after taking appropriate action such as stabilising the situation and calling the emergency services.

In the event of an emergency, care must be taken with the disclosure of information. This is to prevent cases where the media contact relatives of a victim before the police. Unofficial statements can also have later legal implications for all members of the group.

- Liaise and cooperate with the emergency services.
- Do not make any comment to the media other than no comment. Do not discuss any aspect of the incident with anyone who is not a member of the emergency services.
- If contact is made with other Wayfarers walking groups on the trip, just pass a message saying you are waylaid and pass on a revised estimated time of arrival (ETA) if possible. Do not give out any details of the incident.
- Ensure that all members of the group abide by these guidelines.

After the incident, the Walk Leader(s) should bring the walk to an appropriate, safe conclusion. The Walk Leaders' most important objective is to guide all walkers to safety.

Any accident requiring medical assistance should be reported to the committee on return. The details of the incident should also be entered in to the club incident book for future reference.

6.1 Duty of Care

² “Individuals in any sport face a risk of injury as part of the normal participation in that sport. However, if a person has been injured because of another person’s negligence, and that negligence can be proved, they may seek financial compensation under civil law.” To establish that there has been negligence, three factors must exist:

1. A duty of care must be owed.
2. There must be a breach of that duty of care.
3. Actual damage must have resulted from that breach of duty of care.

“In law, a Duty of Care is owed to persons who are so closely and directly affected by an individual’s acts that the individual ought reasonably to have had these people in contemplation as being affected, when directing his or her mind to the acts or omissions that are called into question.”

When considering the nature of a particular duty of care, the following factors ought to be considered:

²Adapted from the Sheffield Unlimited Walking Club Good Practice Guide. Written with reference to Section 6 (Liability) of The BMC Club Guidance Notes. [1]

1. The experience and expertise, or any other relevant characteristics, of the persons concerned, (e.g. greater care would be expected when dealing with a beginner than with an expert.)
2. The dangers of the particular activity.
3. The risks of the injury occurring.
4. The foreseeability of the particular accident occurring.
5. And lastly, the suitability of the equipment or premises.

Amateur climbers should be aware of and accept the risks of participation, and should also be aware that, where they are the nominal or actual leaders of others, they may be held responsible in the event of an accident.

This has obviously been written with Climbers in mind, but the factors mentioned above could be applied to any sport or outdoor pursuit, especially Hill Walking. Although the concept of Duty of Care is not capable of precise definition, it is clear that in certain circumstances it could apply to this club. Therefore the Club President and Committee have a responsibility to inform the Club's Activity and Trip Leaders of its existence, in order that they have the opportunity to decide whether:

1. They want to accept that responsibility.
2. They have a level of experience commensurate with the leadership task required of them and that the care they have exercised is reasonable in all of the circumstances. The court will ask whether activity trip leaders have been properly appointed, in line with the above, and not whether they acted as a qualified leader would.

7 Walk Procedure

This section has been written to provide a typical time line of events before, during and after a trip. These steps should be followed for every club trip as appropriate for the trip type.

7.1 At least one month before departure

1. An approximate destination should have been decided, transport planned and accommodation booked as appropriate.
2. The trip should be advertised to club members.

7.2 At least two weeks before departure

1. Determine any special equipment needs such as sleeping bags and dining kit.
2. Availability of Walk Leaders, Trip Leaders, first aiders, drivers and home contact should be confirmed.
3. Determine whether the walks will generally be Level 1 walks or Level 2 walks.
4. Book transport if needed.
5. Begin sign up of members for the trip.
6. Make sure all members going the trip are aware of equipment requirements (as detailed in the kit list) and that provisions are made to loan kit as appropriate. Make sure all members have up-to-date emergency contact information. Make notes of any dietary preferences if appropriate.
7. Brief all members on the nature of the walking (ie Level 1 or Level 2).
8. Begin route planning.
9. Make sure accommodation key collection is arranged if needed.
10. Make arrangements for food shopping if needed.

7.3 At least two days before departure

1. Check weather.
2. Submit safety forms to the Guild with signatures of all Trip Leaders, all drivers, all Walk Leaders and all First Aiders.
3. Pass information to home contact.
4. Make contact with all participants to confirm kit requirements, and time and place of departure.

7.4 Day of departure

1. Check all members are present and correct.
2. Check all members have equipment prior to departure.
3. Ensure that group equipment, copy of the trip list, emergency contacts printout and copy of the home contact information are taken.

7.5 Prior to start of walk.

1. Finalise routes and exchange with other Walk Leaders. Set ETA and Emergency Declaration Time.
2. Finalize walking groups and distribute kit and index cards appropriately.

7.6 After end of walk

1. Carry out agreed emergency procedures if needed.
2. Ensure all walkers accounted for.

7.7 After end of trip

1. Carry out post trip review, preferably at a committee meeting.

8 Walk Levels

Two levels of walk are described. This is to provide members and leaders with a tool for planning safe and enjoyable trips for all members.

8.1 Level 1 walks

1. These will generally be in places such as the Peak District or Shropshire.
2. The level of fitness required is only moderate.
3. The walks will be of duration of up to about 5 hours or around 1217km in length. The usual maximum altitude will be around 600m above sea level.
4. The walking will generally be on paths and little technical skill will be required.

8.2 Level 2 walks

1. These will generally be in places such as the Lake District, Snowdonia or Scotland.
2. A higher level of fitness will be required than for level 1 walks.
3. The walks may be of duration longer than 5 hours and up to or over 20km in length.
4. The walking may be off path, involve moving over rock and some technical skill may be required.

5. Sections of the walk may involve scrambling. This will usually only be grade 1. If there is the possibility of grade 2 scrambling, this must be mentioned before the start of the walk, and the implications of such an activity made clear. *No walks taken on by the club are expected to require the use of ropes.*
6. Winter conditions may be encountered.

9 Equipment and kit lists

This section gives guidance with respect to equipment used on trips. This includes personal kit as well as club kit.

The gear secretary is responsible for maintaining the club's equipment stock. This includes making sure that Trip Leaders return all equipment taken on trips as well as any gear borrowed by other members.

The Trip and Walk Leaders should ensure that the appropriate equipment is carried on walks and trips. Participants are strongly encouraged to bring the appropriate equipment on walks. This will depend on the nature of the trip and is detailed in Walk Procedure (Section 7).

9.1 Kit lists

These kit lists have been written as a guide for all members and Walk Leaders as to what to take on club walks. Some items can be loaned from club stock if reasonable notice is given. Starred (*) items may be omitted at the Walk Leader's discretion.

Personal Kit Although not exhaustive, all walkers should carry the following items to ensure their comfort and safety.

- Walking boots
- Appropriate trousers and clothing
- Warm clothing
- Waterproof jacket and trousers
- Hat, scarf, gloves
- Torch (*)
- Water
- Food
- Emergency food
- Survival bag (*)
- SOS whistle

Group Kit

- Maps (in map cases)
- Compasses
- Group shelter (*)
- Emergency flares (*)
- First aid kit
- Mobile telephone
- Emergency contacts

A Bibliography

The following selected publications have been chosen for their relevance to the club's activities, and would make relevant reading for all members. The club will try to ensure that copies are available for inspection.

- British Mountaineering Council, *Safety on Mountains*
- Lamgmuir, E., *Mountaincraft and Leadership*
- The Country Code

References

- [1] British Mountaineering Council. Club guidance notes. BMC Publications, 2004.