

Group walks – risk assessment

Use this risk assessment to help you understand the risks and any steps you need to take to stay safe before leading a group walk. Please complete and keep a copy for every walk.

Walk Leader		Date of walk	
Ramblers group	NDWG	Date of risk assessment	
		Date of recce	NA

Possible hazards	Who might be harmed and how?	Ways to control the risk	Action taken?	Comments
Transmission of COVID-19 through close contact / meeting other people	Walkers, members of the public – risk of spreading COVID-19	Plan the walk for a less busy time.	N	Walks planned for standard times, in less busy locations
		Avoid particularly busy or narrow routes where physical distancing is not possible.	Y	Walks reviewed by walk co-ordinator prior to adding to programme
		Give clear information about booking to limit the group size.	Y	Prior booking on Eventbrite required, ticket numbers limited.
		Remind walkers beforehand about the guidelines, including on travel & transport.	Y	Guidance available on website and sent to all walk attendees by email before walk.
		Advise walkers at the start of the walk to maintain physical distancing from others – this is everyone’s responsibility.	Y	Guidance available on website and sent to all walk attendees by email before walk.
		Advise walkers what to do at any pinch points or road crossings to maintain physical distancing.	Y	Guidance available on website and sent to all walk attendees by email before walk.
		Carry a face covering in case of incidents.	Y	Guidance available on website and sent to all walk attendees by email before walk.
		Ensure you have a record of who attended the walk.	Y	Eventbrite booking records retained for 3 weeks for contact tracing (if required)
Transmission of COVID-19 through touching gates,	Walkers, members of the public – risk of	Plan a route which doesn’t include gates or stiles.	N	Not feasible. Guidance available on website and sent to all walk attendees by email before walk.

stiles, fences or equipment	spreading COVID-19	Suggest walkers bring hand sanitiser and/or wear gloves.	Y	Guidance available on website and sent to all walk attendees by email before walk.
		Advise walkers not to share food, drink or equipment such as walking poles.	Y	Guidance available on website and sent to all walk attendees by email before walk.
Possible hazards	Who might be harmed and how?	Ways to control the risk	Action taken?	Comments
Bad weather (including extreme temperatures)	Walkers – risk of illness and injury, risk of the group being stranded	Check the weather forecast and postpone/cancel if necessary. Advise walkers to bring suitable clothing and items for the conditions.	Y	Group policy to cancel walks if severe weather warning, or if local conditions would make walk hazardous. Walk attendees can be contacted by email.
		Make a note of 'escape routes' on the recce.	Y	Majority of walks operated by the group have straightforward navigation and multiple escape points; higher risk walks lead by more experienced walk leaders (e.g. mountain walks in wales/lakes)
Busy roads	Walkers – risk of vehicle collisions	Avoid routes along busy roads and/or check for suitable crossing places on the recce.	Y	Walks reviewed by walk leader & walk co-ordinator before adding to programme
Steep, slippery or muddy sections.	Walkers – risk of trips/slips	Check for muddy/slippery sections on the recce and adapt the route if necessary. Advise walkers to bring suitable footwear for the conditions.	Y	Walks reviewed by walk leader & walk co-ordinator. Guidance available on website and sent to all walk attendees by email before walk.
Livestock	Walkers – risk of injury	Cross fields with livestock calmly and quietly, keeping the group together. Be prepared to divert around livestock if necessary.	Y	At walk leader's discretion – not always possible to predict until on route.
	Risk of property damage if livestock escape	Follow the countryside code and close gates behind you.	Y	Individual responsibility, monitored by walk leader
Cliffs or sheer drops	Walkers – risk of falls	Check paths are suitable for a group to use safely and make changes if necessary.	Y	Walks reviewed by walk leader & walk co-ordinator before adding to programme
		Follow any local warnings or signs, and advise walkers to keep away from the cliff edge.	Y	Walks reviewed by walk leader & walk co-ordinator before adding to programme

If you have any questions about **Ramblers group walks**, please get in touch: volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com

How to carry out a risk assessment

This template is a tool to help you plan and lead Ramblers group walks safely. You must do a risk assessment for each walk.

- Use the template to assess whether your Ramblers group walk is safe to go ahead.
- It's important to carry out a risk assessment **before** the walk takes place. You should start filling it out when planning your walk, and update it with any extra hazards that you notice on your recce.
- Think about the different types of hazards and risks. We've included some common examples, but think carefully about your own walk in case anything needs adding.

Examples of other risks might include:

- Flooded paths, after heavy rain
- Incoming tide for coastal routes
- Unexploded ordnance (if walking on a right of way across a military site)

This isn't an exhaustive list, so think carefully about any specific risks you may encounter on your walk.

- Next, consider the steps you can take to minimise the risk. Remember that this may sometimes mean changing your original plan. For example:
 - I will recce the route again to check whether the paths are flooded, and plan an alternative if necessary
 - I will check the local tide times and adjust the walk start time
 - I will read the local warning signs on my recce and advise walkers about the risks in my welcome briefing
- If you're not sure what to do to reduce the risk, [check our website for advice](#), or contact us at volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com

Your volunteering & COVID-19

Due to COVID-19, there are extra steps we need to take to organise and lead group walks safely. Please visit the [Ramblers website](#) for the latest updates and guidance.

It's **essential** for all volunteers to consider the following questions, when deciding whether to take part in Ramblers activities:

Do you (or does someone else from your household) have COVID-19 symptoms?	<i>If so, you should self-isolate for 7 days. If another person in your household has symptoms, you should self-isolate for 14 days.</i> <i>You must not take part in Ramblers activities during this time.</i> <i>Symptoms include a high temperature, a new continuous cough and the loss, or a change to your sense of smell or taste. Find out more about COVID-19, and what you should do if you have symptoms on the NHS website.</i>
	<i>If you (or someone you live with) are at higher risk of getting seriously ill from coronavirus, you should take extra care to minimise contact with others from outside your household.</i>

Are you 'clinically vulnerable'?	<p><i>Taking part in a Ramblers activity may put you and those around you at higher risk. It may not be the right decision at this time.</i></p> <p><i>Remember – everyone over 70, and those with certain underlying health conditions are considered to be 'clinically vulnerable'. You can find more information on the NHS website.</i></p>
Do you want to volunteer, and do you feel safe and comfortable doing so?	<p><i>Volunteering is a personal choice. There will never be any obligation or pressure to volunteer or take part if you don't want to, or are not able to at this time.</i></p> <p><i>There are lots of ways to get involved from home too – get in touch to find out more: volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com</i></p>