

Strenuous and Technical walks

How to use this risk assessment template

This template includes common hazards and ways that you can manage the risks on your walk.

- Before your walk:** Review the risk assessment and adjust as needed. This could involve crossing out anything not relevant to your walk, or adding further measures that are specific to your walk (into the blank column). There is also a section at the end to make amendments following a recce.
- On the day:** Review and share your plan with walkers – and make changes to your plan if you need to.
- After your walk:** Make a note of any changes or additional hazards that you encountered on the day – what happened, and what actions did you take. There is a section for this at the end.

It is good practice to keep a record of your risk assessment.

Please complete the following information:

Name of Walk:		Walk Leader:	Date of Recce:
---------------	--	--------------	----------------

What are the risks or hazards?	What could happen and who could be harmed?	How we manage the risks	Local or additional measures (as necessary)
Lack of confidence and/or skill	Leaders are stressed and overwhelmed	- All new walk leaders complete introductory training and make the most of opportunities to develop their skills - Leaders have additional skills for the conditions (e.g. advanced navigation, winter mountain skills, avalanche awareness) - Peer support available from more experienced leaders - Leaders only lead within their capabilities	
	Walkers are exposed to unnecessary risks		

Strenuous and Technical walks continued.

What are the risks or hazards?	What could happen and who could be harmed?	How we manage the risks	Local or additional measures (as necessary)
Too many people walking in the group	Leaders are stressed and overwhelmed	• Leaders refer to recommended ratios and manage group size depending on the specific circumstances • Identify additional helpers (e.g. walk assistant, co-leader or backmarker) for large groups • Advertise any limits on group size (and booking information, if needed) in advance	
	Walkers are exposed to unnecessary risks		
Walkers act recklessly	Walkers put themselves and others at risk	• Share information with walkers in advance to establish clear expectations and responsibilities • Give a walk briefing before setting off, to share your plan and expectations • Communicate with walkers throughout the walk	
	Leaders are stressed and overwhelmed		
Weather	Walkers are exposed to extreme cold, heat, or wet	• Check the weather before the walk • If relevant, check the avalanche forecast before the walk • Let people know what to wear and what to bring • Make contingency plans • Set an appropriate pace and take breaks as needed • Stay alert to changing conditions, extremes of temperature and adjust plans accordingly	
Losing walkers	Walkers could get left behind/lost	• Leader knows who is on the walk – asking for names and emergency contact details • Regular headcounts and communication with the group • Appoint a backmarker • Communicate with group throughout the walk	

Strenuous and Technical walks continued.

What are the risks or hazards?	What could happen and who could be harmed?	How we manage the risks	Local or additional measures (as necessary)
Terrain	Walkers trip or fall, resulting in injury	• Leaders complete training on Preventing & Managing Incidents • Check for muddy/slippery/steep sections when planning • Advise walkers of terrain and suitable footwear in advance • Make contingency plans, to draw on if needed in response to the group & conditions • Zigzag up/down any steep sections – highlight benefits of walking poles • Offer reassurance to nervous walkers & take adequate breaks • Remind the group to stay hydrated and carry high-energy snacks • Adjust plans on the walk if needed	
Unsafe/unstable geographic features or obstacles (e.g. water, tides, rock fall, overhangs, and fallen trees)	Walkers trip or fall, resulting in injury	• Follow any local warnings or signs and advise walkers to keep away from sheer drops/edges • Check paths are suitable for a group to use safely and make changes if necessary • Make contingency plans to deal with unexpected features and obstacles • Ensure appropriate navigation skills in the group to re-route and navigate around any challenging or unexpected features • Avoid crossing any significant water features – use bridges or other recognised water crossing points • Check the tide times	
	Walkers get into difficulty and drown		
Livestock	Walkers are at risk of injury from livestock	• Cross fields with livestock calmly and quietly, keeping the group together and any dogs on a short lead (releasing the dog if charged by cows) • Follow the Countryside Code (England & Wales) and Scottish Outdoor Access Code (Scotland) • Leave gates and property as you find them	
	Property is damaged		
	The wider public are at risk of injury from escaped livestock		

Strenuous and Technical walks continued.

What are the risks or hazards?	What could happen and who could be harmed?	How we manage the risks	Local or additional measures (as necessary)
Roads	Walkers are at risk of road traffic accident	- Maintain single file on any road sections without footpath/pavement - Plan route to avoid busy roads where possible - Check for suitable crossing places	
	Other road users are at risk of accident		
Roads (driving)	Road traffic accident puts walkers and other road users at risk of injury	- Remind walkers that the drive to/from the walk is often the riskiest part of the day - Remind drivers to take care, take adequate rests on longer journeys and maintain fluid/blood sugar levels at the end of the day	
Accident or medical emergency	Walkers require first aid or medical attention	- Leader knows who is on the walk – asking for names and emergency contact details - Ask walkers to complete and carry an In Case of Emergency (ICE) card - Leaders complete training on Preventing & Managing Incidents - Know how to contact the emergency services - Ensure mobile phone is fully charged, and consider carrying a power bank - Have a back-up plan for areas without mobile phone signal (emergency beacon/GPS) - Carry a first aid kit – and extra supplies/layers to keep people comfortable while waiting for help to arrive - Ensure appropriate first aid awareness and skills amongst the group	

Strenuous and Technical walks continued.

What are the risks or hazards?	What could happen and who could be harmed?	How we manage the risks	Local or additional measures (as necessary)
Getting lost	Walkers get lost	- Where possible, recce the route a week or so in advance – or carefully plan with good local knowledge, guidebooks and/or maps - Leaders are familiar with the route and contingency plans in case changes are needed - Ensure appropriate navigation skills in the group for the walk and possible conditions - Pre-register phone with 999 emergency text service - Know the hours of dusk and darkness, and plan accordingly - Carry relevant kit – for example a whistle, headtorch and emergency shelter for more remote walks - On more remote walks, complete a Route Card in advance and leave a copy with a designated Emergency Point of Contact (EPOC) – “late back procedure” should be implemented by the EPOC if needed	
	Walkers are exposed to extreme cold, heat or wet		
	There is a communications blackout		
	Walkers run low on food/drink supplies		

Recce: Did you identify any other hazards during your recce/planning? How will you mitigate the risks? Please add below:

What are the risks or hazards?	What could happen and who could be harmed?	How we manage the risks

Following your walk: Did anything unexpected happen? (e.g. the route was blocked, and you had to take a diversion) Make a note here:

What was the risk or hazard?	What could have happened and who could have be harmed?	What action did you take to manage the risk?

Risk Assessment applied to this walk on these dates:

Date of walk	Date of walk	Date of walk	Date of walk	Date of walk	Date of walk	Date of walk