

SAFETY ADVICE FOR WALKERS

So that all members enjoy the walks, please make sure you follow this advice. It will help both the walk leader and other walkers.

Equipment

- Make sure you've got the proper clothing and footwear, etc, for the walk.
 - If you're not properly equipped, you can endanger everyone.
- Weather conditions can change during the walk.
 - A sunny day at 9.30 am can become cold and wet by 5.00 pm, even in summer.

If you are participating in longer rural, weekend or long-distance walks then the following applies:

Essential equipment for walks in winter is:

- a) Waterproof and breathable jacket and trousers plus warm clothing
- b) Spare warm clothing, which, normally, you won't use
- c) Ankle-supporting shoes or boots with an effective grip
- d) Thermal gloves, hat, first aid kit, whistle and survival bag
- e) Food, drink, map, compass, torch and mobile phone (but there's not always a signal in the countryside)
- f) Emergency contact details (printed card in wallet or in holder)

and in summer is:

- a) Waterproof and breathable jacket and shoes or boots (for boots, see c above)
- b) Warm clothing appropriate to the conditions
- b) If it's a mountain walk, still bring the items in d (above) plus spare warm clothing
- c) Food, drink, map, compass and mobile phone
- d) Sun-cream, sun hat and plenty of liquid to drink
- e) Emergency contact details (printed card in wallet or in holder)

- Is it a tough walk / a particularly long walk / a walk in the mountains in winter?

Bring all or more of the above equipment. Haven't got all of it? Ask a committee member or the walk leader beforehand – perhaps you could borrow some.

If you are participating in short Monday and Thursday walks (urban or low-level countryside walk) then the following will be necessary, depending on the conditions:

- Ankle-supporting shoes or boots with an effective grip
- Warm and waterproof clothing
- Torch
- Emergency contact details (printed card in wallet or in holder)

Are you capable of doing the walk?

- The leader will advise on the severity of the walk but ask the leader if in you are in any doubt.
If you can't keep up with the pace of the walk, you won't enjoy the walk, and you will slow the group down. In severe circumstances, you can put everyone in danger!

Follow the leader's instructions

- Unless the leader becomes incapacitated, in times of difficulty it is better to follow the leader's instructions.
- Be courteous, have respect for other participants, respect the advice and information given, and the decisions taken, by the leader/organiser.

Do not go far ahead of the leader

- Also, if you need to stop at any time, inform another walker to let the leader know.

Inform the leader of any medical conditions

- Bring any medication or first aid kit necessary. Check with the leader to ensure you are capable of completing the walk.

Under 18-year-olds must be accompanied by a parent or appropriate adult

Inform the leader if you leave the walk

- You are now responsible for your own safety and for getting back to the cars or youth hostel.

Check with the leader that dogs can be brought on a walk

If you bring a dog on a walk:

- Dogs should be on a lead all the time.
- Check whether there are farm animals in a field; keep your dog away from them.
- Dogs must be on a lead at all times.
- If bulls or farm animals with their young are present, dogs and their owners must keep well away from the other walkers, so as not to create an extra hazard for walkers.

Follow the Countryside Code

Read the Code at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code/the-countryside-code-advice-for-countryside-visitors> or for a summary see:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/646f7507243157000c6f42cd/Countryside_Code_A5.pdf

Its key points are:

- Leave gates and property as you find them.
- Follow Rights of Way, (footpaths, etc), permissive paths and permitted open access land.
- Walk in single file through crops; don't climb fences and walls.
- Leave no litter; don't pick flowers; don't start fires.
- Keep dogs under control; avoid farm animals; clean-up after your dog.
- Be properly equipped for the conditions; check the weather forecast.

... but follow NOG and other rules as well, especially if they are more restrictive. Don't forget to read the Code!

Walking on roads - key points to remember

- Use the pavement (including any path along the side of the road) where there is one.
- Use safe crossing places where possible and follow the Green Cross Code.
 - This means – a place where you can see clearly in all directions; not at a blind bend, the brow of a hill or where you may not be obvious to vehicles.
- Help others to see you by wearing a bright and reflective waistcoat at the front and rear of the party, if there is no pavement. This will usually be provided by the leader.
- Use reflective materials at night such as armbands, sashes or jackets.
- Listen for traffic; you may hear it before you see it.
- Shout a warning to other walkers.
- Take special care with young children.
- It may not always be possible but minimise road walking unless the roads are quiet country lanes or they have a pavement.
- Remember that vehicle drivers may not expect anyone to be walking on a country lane.

What to do when there is no pavement available

- Keep to the right-hand side of the road so you can see oncoming traffic.
- Keep close to the side of the road and be prepared to walk in single file.
- If you come across a sharp right-hand bend, it may be safer to cross to the left-hand side of the road and cross back after the bend.
- There should be look-outs at the front and back of the group wearing bright and/or reflective waistcoats in daylight and reflective clothes in the dark. At night, there should be torches at the front and the rear of the party.