Edinburgh U3A Walking Groups – 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.

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| **Walk Leader** |  | **Date of walk** |  |
| **Walk Route**  **(Short Description)** |  | **Date of risk assessment** |  |
| **Date of recce** |  |

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| **Possible hazards** | **Who might be harmed and how?** | **Ways to control the risk** | **Action taken?**  **(click on the box to tick)** |
| 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. |  |
| Avoid particularly busy or narrow routes where physical distancing is not possible. |  |
| Give clear information about booking to limit the group size. |  |
| Remind walkers beforehand about the guidelines, including on travel & transport. |  |
| Advise walkers at the start of the walk to maintain physical distancing from others – this is everyone’s responsibility. |  |
| Advise walkers what to do at any pinch points or road crossings to maintain physical distancing. |  |
| Carry a face covering in case of incidents and recommend walkers do the same. |  |
| Ensure you have a record of who attended the walk. |  |
| Transmission of COVID-19 through touching gates, stiles, fences or equipment | Walkers, members of the public – risk of spreading COVID-19 | Avoid touching gates and path furniture where possible. |  |
| Suggest walkers bring hand sanitiser and/or wear gloves. |  |
| Advise walkers not to share food, drink or equipment such as walking poles. |  |
| **Possible hazards** | **Who might be harmed and how?** | **Ways to control the risk** | **Action taken?**  **(click on the box to tick)** |
| 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. |  |
| Make a note of ‘escape routes’ on the recce. |  |
| Busy roads | Walkers – risk of vehicle collisions | Avoid routes along busy roads and/or check for suitable crossing places on the recce. |  |
| 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. |  |
| Livestock | Walkers – risk of injury  Risk of property damage if livestock escape | Cross fields with livestock calmly and quietly, keeping the group together. Be prepared to divert around livestock if necessary. |  |
| Follow the Access Code (Scotland). Close gates behind you. |  |
| Cliffs or sheer drops | Walkers – risk of falls | Check paths are suitable for a group to use safely and make changes if necessary. |  |
| Follow any local warnings or signs, and advise walkers to keep away from the edge. |  |
| *(Please add more lines if needed)* |  |  |  |

**How to carry out a risk assessment**

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

* Use the template to assess whether your group walk is safe to go ahead.
* The template includes suggestions for the ways to control the risks – **you do not need to tick every box.** The important thing is to identify the potential hazards and note the actions you will take to reduce the risk.
* 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. The template includes some common examples, but is not exhaustive so think carefully about any specific risks you may encounter on your own walk in case anything needs added.

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)
* 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