



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

# **NORTHALLERTON U3A**

## **GUIDELINES BOOKLET**

**FOR**

### **WALKERS AND WALK RELATED GROUPS**

**Issue 2 Dated: 03 October 2018**

**This supersedes all previous guidelines**

**(The U3A National Website address is: [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk))**

## Information and guidance for members of walking groups

### 1. General

These notes are for the guidance of U3A members taking part in any walks. They relate to members' safety and health and following them will meet the requirements of the U3A's Public Liability Insurance policy.

The notes have been approved by the U3A Committee: they will be updated from time to time as required and reviewed at intervals of no more than one year. Group Leaders are advised to carry a copy of the notes in the First Aid kit carried by each group.

The roles and responsibilities of the Group Leader, Walk Leader, Back Marker and individual members, together with some general safety guidance and procedures to follow in an emergency, are shown below.

### 2. The Group Leader (or appointed substitute)

The Group Leader should:

- ensure that all walkers have a copy of and understand these guidelines, both as walk leaders where applicable and as individual walkers;
- issue these guidelines to all new members joining their walking group;
- ensure that all walkers have a copy of and understand the Third Age Trust's insurance conditions;
- inspect the First Aid kit at least every six months and replace any outdated items;
- support the Walk Leader in their responsibilities and ensure they are briefed about this guidance.

If the Group Leader is not present for a particular walk, a substitute, normally the Walk Leader, should be appointed with the above responsibilities as appropriate.

### 3. The Walk Leader

The Walk Leader should:

- Ensure that the walk is an appropriate length for the particular group:
  - Long Walking Group walks should be between 8 and 10 miles.
  - Intermediate and Alternative Walking Group walks should be between 5 and 7 miles
  - Short Walking Group walks should be between 3 and 5 miles.

Please try to be accurate and don't rely on walk distances given in publications.

- Provide relevant details of the walk in advance to the Group Leader to be included in the events diary as follows:
  - a brief outline of the location and nature of the walk, including its length, the terrain, its degree of difficulty and any other relevant information, such as the height gained, any lengthy climbs involved etc;
  - the start time and meeting point for the walk, including the grid reference, and car parking facilities available.
- Prior to the walk day, the Walk Leader must have undertaken a "recce" of the route to be able to identify possible hazards on the walk and to be an effective navigator leader. (Refer to appendix 5 in this booklet for guidance.)
- On the day carry (or be certain that another member of the group on the walk is carrying):
  - a map of the walk route (scale of 1:25,000 or larger) and a compass (if considered necessary for the particular walk);
  - the recommended Northallerton U3A First Aid kit; (appendix 4 in this booklet)
  - a survival bag;
  - a mobile telephone;
  - two fluorescent bibs; and
  - copies of the Incident Report form (appendix 3 in this booklet).
- Note the names of walkers; undertake a head count at the start of the walk and make regular head counts throughout the walk, with a final check when the walk is completed.
- Outline to the group, before starting the walk, the planned route and the nature of the terrain, highlighting any potential risk areas or hazards.
- Designate a Back Marker.
- Ensure on a sensible basis during the walk that no member(s) of the group is/are permitted to proceed ahead of the group, walk behind the Back Marker, or return alone. If any person(s) insists on returning or using a different route, a full note should be taken of the proposal and, in appropriate cases, another group member should be asked to accompany the person(s) and confirm their safe arrival at the destination. If an injured person is returning separately

from the group, two persons should accompany them.

- Organise walking on roads in accordance with the latest Highway Code (see Appendix 1). 'High viz' jackets should be worn, by him/herself and the Back Marker, for road walking and any other occasions when they may be beneficial to the group's safety.
- Ensure that any person not properly equipped or apparently not capable of safely completing the walk is not allowed to start the walk.
- Take responsibility in the event of an accident or incident and complete a copy of the enclosed Incident Report. Further copies are included in the walk leader's pack.
- Support the Group Leader in their responsibilities.

The Walk Leader has the right to alter the route of the walk if weather conditions deteriorate or if a member of the party is injured or taken ill.

#### 4. Back Markers

The importance of having a Back Marker should not be underestimated. They are an important part of the safety arrangements and can provide valuable assistance and support to Walk Leaders. They can also help the Walk Leader to consider the correct pace to suit all walkers and identify any problems being experienced by less experienced or slower walkers.

#### 5. Individual walking group members

For the safety of members, reces and associated risk assessments are carried out for all walks. However, members are reminded that they are responsible for their own safety and take part at their own risk.

Individual walkers should:

- read this document and, having understood the conditions of this document, sign the Record of Members sheet;
- follow the spirit of the requirements in supporting the designated leaders;
- not leave the group without informing the leader or back marker;
- understand that, if they leave the group of their own volition, they do so at their own risk;
- take responsibility for their personal footwear/clothing, food/liquids and equipment. Ideally all walkers should carry a whistle, a compass and emergency food;
- consider their own level of fitness and ability to take part in a particular walk, so that they do not cause a risk to themselves or others in the party. The Walk Leader will refuse to take a member or visitor on the walk if he/she feels that the person is inadequately equipped;
- inform the Walk Leader of any relevant medical conditions before the start of the walk;
- carry a copy of the "Contact & Medical Information for use in an Emergency" form in a waterproof container in their backpack; this may be a plastic bag. An example form is attached at Appendix 2;
- follow the instructions of the Walk Leader and Back Marker. Avoid walking in front of the Walk Leader or behind the Back Marker during the course of the walk, except with the Walk Leader's agreement;
- observe the Highway Code and the Countryside Code;
- also carry an audible alarm (whistle), a basic first aid kit and a plastic bag or other suitable container for rubbish.

If sight is lost of people in front during a walk by any of the walkers, a whistle should be sounded to alert them wherever possible (and the walk leader directly if feasible). Otherwise, the alarm should be given by word of mouth. Upon hearing this alarm, group members should relay the alert forward if necessary to ensure the walk leader and others are aware of the situation and can take appropriate action.

It is also expected that each walker will take a turn, from time to time, to act as the walk leader for a particular group.

#### 6. Emergency information

In the event of an accident in which outside assistance is considered necessary, the procedure outlined below should be followed:

Write down the following details which the Emergency Services will require:

- o a six-figure grid reference;
- o a description of the location;

- o the nature of any injuries;
- o the name and age of the injured person;
- o relevant medical details and contacts;
- o the time of the accident.
- Dial 999 or 112 (the latter is the European emergency number) and ask for the police. If it is necessary to move away from the group to achieve a good signal, at least two people should undertake this task.
- Stay by the phone or, if using a mobile, leave it switched on and stay within the signal reception area.
- Have something bright beside the casualty.
- Ensure the casualty is comfortable and warm.
- Consider the comfort of other group members who may get cold whilst waiting.
- When the Emergency Services arrive, ask a crew member which hospital the injured person will be taken to.
- Ensure that the injured person's nominated contact is advised, after consultation with the emergency services
- If it is not possible to make mobile phone contact, a minimum of two members should go for help, having before leaving written down the above information and agreed the route they will follow. The remainder of the group should note down the route planned and the time of departure.
- On the group's return the Group Leader (or Walk Leader if the Group Leader is not present) should complete an Incident Report Form (see Appendix 3), which will then be passed to the Secretary of Northallerton U3A.

#### 7. Walk Cancellation Arrangements

- Individual Walk Leaders are responsible for initially considering whether a walk should take place. This is logical, as the Walk Leader undertook the recce and should know the proposed walking terrain and whether it is 'walkable' in reasonable safety on the day.
- The actual arrangements adopted are essentially a matter for individual groups, but it is suggested that consideration of any adverse conditions is made on the Monday evening prior to the walk, although it is possible that a final decision may be made first thing on the Tuesday morning.
- The Walk Leader may wish to call the Group Leader to discuss the conditions and reach a consensus on undertaking the walk or agreeing to cancel.
- If a walk is to be cancelled, the Walk Leader should telephone group members (to save time and expense, he/she should ask a few members to take on the responsibility for making some calls). As a back-up, the Group Leader may email or text (or both) members of his/her group.
- Individual walkers, who have not been contacted and are uncertain about whether a walk is to take place, should ring the appropriate Walk Leader.

With the permission of individual members, contact details will be circulated to the group.

## APPENDIX 1

### HIGHWAY CODE 2007 (EXTRACTS)

#### Note 2:

If there is no pavement or footpath, walk on the right-hand side of the road so that you can see oncoming traffic. You should take extra care and:

- be prepared to walk in single file, especially on narrow roads or in poor light
- keep close to the side of the road.

It may be safer to cross the road well before a sharp right-hand bend (so that oncoming traffic has a better chance of seeing you). Cross back after the bend.

#### Note 5:

Organised walks. Groups of people should use a path if available. If one is not available, they should keep to the left. Look-outs should be positioned at the front and back of the group, and they should wear fluorescent clothes in daylight and reflective clothes in the dark. At night, the look-out in front should carry a white light and the one at the back a red light. People on the outside of large groups should also carry lights and wear reflective clothing.

## APPENDIX 2

### CONTACT AND MEDICAL INFORMATION FOR USE IN AN EMERGENCY

(Please complete using waterproof ink and ideally, carry in a waterproof container. This should be readily accessible in case of emergency).

Name: .....

Address: .....

..... Postcode.....

Home telephone:..... DoB.....

#### Main contact in case of emergency

Name: ..... Relationship:.....

Address: .....

..... Postcode.....

Home/work tel: ..... Mobile tel:.....

#### Secondary contact (if main contact cannot be contacted)

Name: ..... Relationship:.....

Address: .....

..... Postcode.....

Home/work tel: ..... Mobile tel:.....

#### Doctor

Name of Doctor: .....

Name of Practice .....

Address: .....

..... Postcode.....

Telephone:.....

#### Medical information

Blood Group:..... Allergies:.....

Medical conditions .....

Prescribed medicines taken/carried (if appropriate please attach/enclose a sample).

**APPENDIX 3**



**NORTHALLERTON**

**INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

- 1) Name and address of Member involved:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) Name and address of other(s) involved: (continue overleaf if necessary).
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) Time and date of incident:
- 4) Location:
- 5) Nature and circumstances of incident:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 6) Details of incident and property damage: (attach photographs where possible)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 7) Witness details:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 8) Action(s) taken:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 9) Give details of any specialised assistance:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 10) Give details of any subsequent medical assistance:

**Signed Group Leader**

**Tel:**

**Date:**

#### **APPENDIX 4**

##### **NORTHALLERTON U3A RECOMMENDED FIRST AID KIT**

**Additional items may be included.**

**1 Triangular bandage**

**1 Pair thin plastic gloves**

**Alcohol free cleansing wipes**

**Variety of plasters**

**Pair of tweezers**

**Tick remover**

**6", 4" and 2" crepe bandages**

**Sterile dressings (small, medium, large)**

**Roll of Micropore tape**

**Pair of scissors**

**Eyewash solution**

**Conforming bandage 7.5 x 45 cm**

**1 space blanket**

**It is the responsibility of the holder of the first aid kit to ensure that all items are within date, where appropriate, and to renew any out-of-date items.**



**APPENDIX 5****Model Risk Assessment**

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>At risk?</b>	<b>How is the risk controlled</b>
<b>Traffic/Roads</b>	All walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warn walkers in pre-walk brief</li> <li>Cross at safer places</li> <li>Leader and backmarker to wear hi-vis vests</li> </ul>
<b>Dual use paths (e.g. cycle paths, drives, lanes)</b>	All walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warn walkers in pre-walk brief</li> <li>Keep to one side of path; check group not drifting across path</li> <li>Group members to warn others of approaching vehicles</li> </ul>
<b>Dog mess</b>	All walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warn as necessary on route</li> </ul>
<b>Dogs</b>	All walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dogs are not permitted on U3A walks</li> <li>Ask dog owners to control problem dogs</li> </ul>
<b>Overhanging branches</b>	All walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warn as necessary on route</li> </ul>
<b>Weather</b>	All walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cancel walk if weather forecast suggests walk may be unsafe</li> <li>Take temporary shelter if possible</li> <li>Abandon walk if necessary</li> </ul>
<b>People becoming separated from group</b>	All walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry out head count at beginning of walk; repeat at regular intervals</li> <li>Appoint a backmarker</li> <li>Walk leader to call front walkers back if too far in front</li> <li>If it is necessary to fall behind the group, inform backmarker when leaving and re-joining group</li> </ul>
<b>Crossing areas with other activities in progress (e.g. golf courses, MoD land)</b>	All walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warn walkers in pre-walk brief and as necessary on route</li> <li>Look out for and obey all instructive and warning notices</li> </ul>
<b>Slips, trips and falls</b> Please note specific hazard (e.g. running water, particularly rough ground, loose surface)	All walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warn walkers in pre-walk brief and as necessary on route</li> <li>Help other walkers around muddy spots, narrow paths etc</li> <li>Amend route or abandon walk if accessibility very bad</li> </ul>
<b>Route unexpectedly barred</b>	All walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry large scale map (1:25000 or greater) call on local knowledge or group knowledge if possible</li> <li>Use GPS if available</li> </ul>
<b>Inclines</b> Please note specific severe inclines	All walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warn walkers in pre-walk brief</li> <li>Allow everyone to climb (or descend) at their own pace</li> <li>Rest at end of climb (or descent), wait for group and take head count</li> </ul>
<b>Stiles</b> Pay particular attention to damaged or slippery stiles	All walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warn walkers in pre-walk brief</li> <li>Help other group members as necessary</li> </ul>
<b>Cattle grids</b>	All walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use pedestrian bypass gates at all times</li> </ul>
<b>New members, especially new walkers</b>	All, particularly the new member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the new member is properly equipped</li> <li>Regular group members to "buddy" new member</li> </ul>
<b>Livestock</b>	All walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be aware of which animals are a potential risk</li> <li>Do not approach livestock directly</li> <li>Amend route or abandon walk if risk is severe</li> </ul>
<b>Watercourses</b>	All walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warn walkers in pre-walk brief</li> <li>Draw attention to warning signs and rescue equipment where available</li> </ul>

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**NORTHALLERTON U3A**

**WALKING RELATED GROUPS GUIDELINE BOOKLET**

**CONFIRMATION OF RECEIPT**

**Name (printed)**.....

**Membership No** .....

**Contact Telephone No. (mobile preferred)** .....

**Email address** .....

**I confirm that I have received and will read this booklet and address any queries to the Group Leader.**

**I also confirm that the above telephone number and email address can be given to the other members of the walk group (delete if not willing for this information to be given to others).**

**Signed**..... **Date** .....

**SIGNATURE PAGE - Please cut along this line and hand to walk leader**

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