

Group walks – risk assessment for u3a groups

We are recommending that u3a walking group leaders follow the Ramblers risk assessment for walking groups during this period to help you understand the risks and any steps you need to take to stay safe before leading a group walk. Please complete a copy for every walk and keep this for 1 year after the date of the walk.



Walk Leader		Date of walk	<i>DD/MM/YY</i>
u3a group:		Date of risk assessment	<i>DD/MM/YY</i>
		Date of recce	<i>DD/MM/YY</i>

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.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Avoid particularly busy or narrow routes where physical distancing is not possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Give clear information about limiting the group size in line with government guidance.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Remind walkers beforehand about the guidelines, including on travel & transport.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Advise walkers at the start of the walk to maintain physical distancing, and what to do at any pinch points or road crossings – this is everyone’s responsibility.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Carry a face covering in case of incidents.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Ensure you have a record of who attended the walk for contact tracing.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Suggest walkers bring hand sanitiser.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Advise walkers not to share food, drink or equipment such as walking poles.	<input type="checkbox"/>

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.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Make a note of 'escape routes' on the recce.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Busy roads	Walkers – risk of vehicle collisions	Avoid routes along busy roads and/or check for suitable crossing places on the recce.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Livestock	Walkers – risk of injury	Cross fields with livestock calmly and quietly, keeping the group together. Be prepared to divert around livestock if necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Risk of property damage if livestock escape	Follow the Countryside Code (England & Wales) and Access Code (Scotland). Leave gates and property as you find them.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cliffs or sheer drops	Walkers – risk of falls	Check paths are suitable for a group to use safely and make changes if necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Follow any local warnings or signs, and advise walkers to keep away from the edge.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>(Please add more lines if needed)</i>			

If you have any questions about **u3a group walks**, please get in touch: u3a.office@u3a.org.uk

How to carry out a risk assessment

This template is a tool to help you plan and lead walking 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.
- We've included 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. 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