

# Walk Leaders Responsibilities

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## 1. Walk Leader's Role

Our walk leaders are volunteers who have agreed to facilitate walks on behalf of the club. The walk leader is normally a volunteer with some hillwalking experience who takes the lead role for a particular walk on the understanding that each participant takes clear responsibility for themselves as individuals in every aspect of the activity. The walk leader may designate specific tasks to experienced members of the group or to those with specific skills.

Leaders should:

1. Be familiar with the route or be aware that another member of the group knows the route
2. On new or unfamiliar routes make out a detailed route card to include distance, height gain, and time taken for each leg and compass bearings.
3. Be prepared to alter the route in accordance with the needs of the group and the weather conditions.
4. Show good example with regard to the principles of Leave No Trace, crossing farmland etc.
5. Plan a suitable alternative or escape route in case of bad weather or problems arising.
6. Arrange a headcount and list of participants (as per Walk Registration Form)
7. Carry a list of members and guests including their contact numbers.
8. Identify persons in group with navigation skills.
9. Designate a member of the group to act as backmarker (if necessary according to group size)
10. Advise walkers re appropriate clothing and footwear.
11. Introduce guests and new members to the group
12. Decide on method of communication with backmarker (e.g. whistle etc)
13. Notify the club secretary of any incidents or accidents as soon as possible after the event (Incident Report Form)

## 2. Group Safety

Each walker carries the same level of responsibility and duty of care for their own safety and the safety of other members of the group. However, if considered necessary in the circumstances, the walk leader may, at his or her discretion, take whatever action is required to safeguard the safety of the group. The leader (or any other club member in the absence of a designated leader) may refuse to allow a person on a walk if that person is deemed to be a danger to themselves or to the safety and enjoyment of the group.

1. Participants must have appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended below and on our Website
2. Participants are advised to carry fully charged mobile phone
3. Participants are advised to complete "In Case of Emergency Form" and store in rucksack
4. Participants should be aware that medical conditions or medications could impact on their ability to complete the walk and, if so, should inform the walk leader in confidence.
5. Participants should respect all reasonable decisions of the walk leader and/or the group.
6. Participants, who need to stop for any reason, should inform the walk leader or another member of the group
7. Participants who choose to leave the group or are unable to continue should inform the walk leader and should sign off from the Walk Registration Sheet and should also contact the walk leader as soon as they are safely off the mountain.
8. Any person who becomes detached from the group is advised to hold their position for a reasonable period of time and wait for the group to return to that position. If possible, contact should be made with the walk leader or any other member of the group by phone as soon as possible.
9. Whistles are recommended to attract attention in an emergency.

### **3. Group Briefing**

It is a matter for the discretion of the walk leader to determine if a briefing is required at the beginning of a walk. The requirement for and content of the briefing will be informed by the circumstances applicable at the time. Circumstances could include the size, composition, experience and skills of the group, degree of difficulty of the walk route, weather conditions and any other matters which could affect the outcome of the walk. Among the items which may be considered for inclusion in the briefing are:

1. Weather-indication of weather conditions expected
2. Clothing and footwear appropriate to the terrain and weather conditions
3. Food and drink- adequate supplies of food and water for the walk duration and weather conditions
4. Sun protection in warm weather conditions to protect against sunburn
5. Outline of route plan including distance, height gain, potential hazards i.e. ridge, gully etc
6. Walk duration

### **4. Guests and New Members**

Guests are welcome to join our walks subject to a limit of three walks. Guests must contact the Club at least 48 hours in advance of first walk. Members wishing to bring Guests on a walk must also contact the walk leader 48 hours in advance of walk.

The walk leader (or any other club member in the absence of a designated leader) should satisfy themselves as to the suitability of guests for any particular walk and ensure that they are appropriately equipped for the conditions. The walk leader should also ensure that the Walk Registration Form is completed by guests.

Where guests are introduced by club members, then those members will assume responsibility in regard to the guest's suitability for the planned walk including appropriate clothing, equipment, food etc and be prepared to remain with them as necessary.

All experienced members have a role in assisting and encouraging new members to integrate into club activities. Generally this will occur on club walks where experienced members should be alert to the needs of new members so that the skills and knowledge can be passed on even in an informal way. It is important that, when the opportunity arises, advice is provided in relation to hazards and risks that may arise. New members should also be involved in the decision making process so that they can make an informed choice to participate. New members should also be encouraged to familiarise themselves with club policies.

## 5. Equipment Requirements

### Essential

1. Walking boots with ankle support
2. Waterproof jacket and trousers
3. Walking trousers (no-denim)
4. Warm clothing, including hat and gloves
5. Additional warm clothing
6. Food and water for the duration of the walk.
7. Whistle
8. Mobile phone (fully charged).

### Additional Items Recommended

1. Map and Compass (GPS optional).
2. Head torch with spare battery and bulbs
3. First Aid Kit.
4. Survival Bag and or Shelter.

Other items of equipment which may be carried, subject to personal preference, include gaiters, walking poles, and sit mat (foam mat)

## 6. Respect the Mountains

### Respect Property

To maintain the goodwill of all rural dwellers and landowners, you are requested not to interfere with livestock, crops or other property. You should not cause damage to gates, fences or walls.

### Parking

Car pooling is advised to minimise the number of cars as most start locations will have limited parking space. You are requested not to obstruct private entrances, gateways or narrow access roads. Cars should always be locked and valuables removed.

### Dogs

Because of the danger to farm animals and in order to maintain the goodwill of farmers, dogs are prohibited on club walks.

### Erosion

Where possibly you are requested to use existing paths and walk in the centre of the path to minimise erosion.

### Litter

In accordance with Leave No Trace principles; all litter, including biodegradable items such as fruit peels and tea bags must not be discarded in the countryside and must always be brought back home.

### Archaeology

All items of archaeological importance including cairns and huts should remain undisturbed.

### Emergency Alert

To attract attention in an emergency give six whistle blasts, shouts or flashes of a torch. Then wait one minute and repeat as necessary. If you hear or see such a distress signal the reply is three blasts, shouts or flashes

## **7. Missing Person**

### **Action to be initiated in the event that a person is missing from the group**

1. Estimate time duration from the last observation
2. Call the missing persons mobile phone, (if no reply received continue as follows)
3. Is the missing person likely to have remained in a particular location?
4. Is the missing person likely to have taken a particular route?
5. Assess situation at the time including terrain, weather, hazards etc
6. Assess the impact on the safety of the other group members-are any other members at risk?
7. Check if the missing person has returned to base and, if necessary, dispatch two members of the group back to base to check that location.
8. Decide if a search can be organised and if all members of the group are fit to participate
9. Organise a sweep search back to the last observed location
10. Spacing of searchers will take account of the nature of the terrain and potential hazards on the route
11. Searchers will be spaced so that any searcher will remain within the visibility of at least one other searcher at all times.

In the event that the sweep search fails to locate the missing person and there is no indication that he/she may be injured the group will return to base and will consider:

1. Contacting the emergency services –Dial 112 or 999 and request Marine Rescue.(if local) or Mountain Rescue (if outside the Dingle area)
2. Contact other club members who may be in a position to assist or mobilise assistance

## **8. Accident**

### **Action to be initiated in the event of an accident**

1. Remove injured party from immediate danger
2. Administer first aid
3. Provide shelter for injured party
4. Fix position accurately from Map and/or GPS
5. Decide on best route for help
6. Contact 112/999, if necessary, and follow instructions given by the emergency services
7. In the event that there is no phone coverage, send two people for help - with the details outlined in Form No1 Mountain Rescue Incident Report below.
8. Inform injured party's contact person: details to be found on "In Case of Emergency Form" as soon as possible

## 9. When Things Go Wrong

(Advice from Kerry Mountain Rescue Team -[www.kerrymountainrescue.ie](http://www.kerrymountainrescue.ie))

### **Stay Calm! Think Clearly! Think Logically! Don't rush early decisions!**

1. Initial assessment of the situation - is it safe to approach the casualty?
2. Treat any injuries as best you can.
3. Formulate plan of action

### **Plan of Action**

- Is the casualty's condition potentially life threatening? (e.g. serious head injury, major internal/external bleeding).
- The time factor - How long will it take for help to arrive? How long will it take to evacuate the casualty without outside assistance?
- Am I equipped to deal with the situation myself?
- Ability?
- Knowledge?
- Experience?
- Equipment?
- Man power?
- Could an improvised evacuation attempt aggravate any injuries?
- Can the party safely be left unattended?
- Can the casualty safely be left in the hands of the party?
- Which party members can be sent for help?
- Are the remainder of the party at risk? (e.g. hypothermia).
- Does the casualty or party need to be moved to a more sheltered location?
- How much daylight is left?
- Are there any passer by's or other groups who could help?
- How can your human resources best be deployed?
- How can the available equipment best be utilised?
- What are the possible escape/evacuation routes? Is specialised equipment required?

## 10. Forms

### **Mountain Rescue Incident Report**

In the event that it becomes necessary to contact the emergency services sufficient information in relation to condition of the casualty and other relevant details should be provided on Form No 1 below which is recommended by Kerry Mountain Rescue

### **Incident Report Form**

An Incident Report Form (Form No.2) will be completed in respect of all accidents and incidents. The form will be completed by the person attending the casualty or by the walk leader and submitted to the Club Secretary as soon as possible after the incident. The Secretary will forward same to the Club's insurers

### **Walk Registration Form**

The names of all participants including guests and members will be recorded on a Walk Registration Form (Form No.3)

## 11. References

Walking Safely/Good practices for Hillwalkers - [www.mountaineering.ie](http://www.mountaineering.ie)

Kerry Mountain Rescue Team - [www.kerrymountainrescue.ie](http://www.kerrymountainrescue.ie)

Leave No Trace - [www.leavenotraceireland.org](http://www.leavenotraceireland.org)