

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR LED WALKS

BACKGROUND

The East Yorkshire and Derwent Area of the Ramblers Association (RA), arranges approximately 700 walks a year and to maintain this programme requires approximately 200 Leaders. Acknowledging some members are concerned about their level of responsibility whilst leading a walk, we are endeavouring to ensure responsibilities of Leaders are balanced with those of individual walkers on led walks. Importantly, although no formal training is required, experienced Leaders offer to share navigation awareness and skills.

This document explains how walks are conducted in our area, responsibilities expected of Walk Leaders, back marker and all walkers in a group. Nothing in this document alters legal responsibilities nor seeks to clarify any aspect of common law perceived to apply to walks. These notes are only applicable to walks graded easy to moderate.

“Good Practice” should be followed to ensure walks are organised and completed in a safe, responsible way. We essentially use “Good Practice” as meaning common sense that has developed over time and formed part of the Group’s established way of operating.

All walks organised by Areas and Groups automatically receive civil liability insurance protection through the RA’s national policy. This is designed to indemnify leaders and groups against claims for damage, injury or, death occurring during or, in consequence of a led walk. This is not Personal Accident Insurance; members walk at their own risk; and are not covered for personal accidents, illness or injury during a walk.

LED WALKS

DEFINITION - To be considered an official Ramblers walk and therefore protected by the civil liability insurance policy, all walks including coach rambles must be:

- Brought to the attention of the Area Programme Co-ordinator.
- Publicised in advance in at least one of the following: - Walks Finder, Area Programme, other printed programme or, the Group/Area website
- Have an authorised nominated leader; where appropriate a back marker; both being members; whom ideally, together or separately have reconnoitred the proposed walk.

RESPONSIBILITIES

EVERY WALKER - You are personally responsible for ensuring you are fit and able and adequately kitted out to participate in a walk. Children under 15 years old can only participate if accompanied by an adult who will be personally responsible for the child. Conduct throughout a walk should be focussed on group safety.

- If you are unsure about your fitness level then try a short and easy walk first or consult your doctor.
- Ensure you are wearing suitable footwear and clothing for the walk.
- It is always advisable to carry wet weather clothing even if the weather forecast looks favourable.

- Protection creams and hats should also be used during periods of sunshine
- Always bring some food and adequate drink even if the walk includes a pub or cafe break.
- Read and comply with all advice and guidelines issued by the organisers.
- Follow all instructions given by your Walk Leader. It is your responsibility to behave sensibly and minimise the potential for accidents
- Walk behind the leader and in front of the back marker unless a Leader directs otherwise - but always remain within close proximity and vision. If you need to drop out for a comfort break make sure you tell the back marker. Going ahead of a Leader may be deemed as having left a walk and being uninsured.
- When walking on roads keep yourself safe from traffic and make others aware of any traffic dangers that you can see - walk on the same side of the road as the leader.
- It is a joint responsibility to leave field gates as they are found - follow the Countryside Code
- If you find the walk pace too quick promptly alert the leader or back marker so the pace can be adjusted.
- Carry some form of identification, including contact details of next of kin and if appropriate details of any relevant medical conditions in case of an emergency. If you have a special medical requirement or medication that might need to be administered during a walk, it is your responsibility to make someone aware who is willing and able to assist you.
- For emergency use walkers should carry a whistle and a small first-aid kit in case of minor injury.
- Dogs are NOT permitted on every walk - please check the programme. Dogs should be kept on a lead at all times and a short lead is compulsory when livestock are encountered or if walking on roads. Registered Assistance Dogs are allowed on all walks provided that they are kept on a lead at all times.
- It is courtesy to thank the Walk Leader at the end of the walk if you have enjoyed it

LEADERS

- To observe that participants are adequately equipped and attired for a walk - Leaders may refuse to accept those whom, in their opinion are inadequately equipped or appear unfit for the intended walk.
- Lead the walk, appoint a back marker if considered necessary e.g. based on numbers, terrain, weather conditions etc
- With the back marker, if one is appointed, to keep the walking group together.
- Be sufficiently equipped for an emergency e.g. first aid kit, whistle and a mobile phone to contact the emergency services.
- To oversee but share responsibility for dealing with an incident, accident or emergency
- In the event of an incident as defined by insurance guidelines, to complete an Incident Report Form to be forwarded to the Group Secretary for onward transmission to RA Central Office.

Planning the Walk

- Be familiar with the route by walking it beforehand, ideally with the back marker.
- Stay off roads as much as possible
- Before you set off check weather forecasts and in extreme circumstances consider cancelling the walk if you consider it is necessary for reasons of safety.

On the Walk

- Be early and welcoming – identify guests and new members - do a head count of those walking
- Tell everyone the distance, terrain and any sections where particular care is required.
- Advise that should anyone wish to leave the walk either by walking ahead or finishing early, they must inform the leader and that thereafter they will be entirely responsible for themselves.
- The party may become spread out, so try to avoid large gaps occurring by slowing down the pace and making frequent stops to allow those at the rear to catch up. Do not move on just as the back-marker appears since their need for a short rest will be greater than those at the front.
- Close up the party for complicated turnings, poor visibility or in woodland.
- When road walking or difficult roads to cross give instructions on a code of conduct. In general, walk in single file and on the right side of the road to face the oncoming traffic, crossing over to the left when you are about to approach the inside of a right bend.
- Consider wearing High Visibility clothing when leading the party along a road without a proper footpath
- When crossing open fields direct walkers to be no more than two abreast and in single file when crossing fields that are ploughed or in crop.
- Exercise care when encountering cattle (especially bulls, bullocks and cows with calves). Walk around them where possible to create a significant and safe buffer. Consider escape routes for those members who may feel apprehensive and need to be re-assured.
- After the walk, check everyone is accounted for and thank them for attending

INCIDENTS and EMERGENCIES

Very rarely does an incident occur – but in such situations it is best to use all resources and experience within a group, working together to resolve the problem.

- Nevertheless, the Walk Leader has specific responsibility for ultimately deciding on the most appropriate course of action, including resolving differences of opinion on how best to deal with an incident.
- In the event of an injury or a medical problem, the Walk Leader in consultation with group members should decide who is best able to cope with the incident and others assist as best as they feel capable.

- If emergency assistance is required, call the services 999 or 112 [mobiles] if possible. Try your 'phone even if it shows no signal as another service provider may pick up a call. Be prepared to give as much information as possible to the operator; e.g. precise location, nature of incident and help required.
- A Walk Leader may use group members to seek help by going to a nearby village or premises. If help cannot be summoned in any other way, six blasts of a whistle at one-minute intervals is a recognised emergency signal.
- Members of a party should not become lost if following walking protocols. However if this occurs a leader shall take appropriate steps to recover the situation. Use of a whistle to indicate positions can be very effective. Avoid searchers also becoming lost by agreeing search methods, communications and turn back points to rejoin the main group.

Guidance for Members Relating to Children and Vulnerable Adults on Led Walks

Policy: East Yorkshire and Derwent Area of the Ramblers Association encourages as many people as possible to walk with us as part of our Led Walks Programme.

When children or vulnerable adults want to attend our walks, we need to take appropriate precautions to ensure that they are properly safeguarded during their time with us.

The following guidance is recommended to be followed by all members. This guidance is based on common sense and should be adapted to specific circumstances as necessary.

Accompanying Children and Vulnerable Adults: Children under the age of 15 must be accompanied by an adult who brings them on the walk. The adult will be responsible for the behaviour and individual needs of the child.

Vulnerable adults must be accompanied by a carer or responsible adult who will be responsible for their individual needs unless the carer, or organisation responsible for the individual, gives their consent for the vulnerable adult to attend a walk unaccompanied.

Dealing with suspicions of abuse: Anyone taking part in a Ramblers' activity who witnesses an example of possible abuse or has any suspicion of abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, has an individual responsibility to report their concern either to the police, the Children and Families Services of the local authority or the NSPCC.

Reporting Obstructions: if obstructions to Rights of Way are encountered you are urged as an individual to **write to the local authority concerned.**

Highway Authorities for Rights of Way Complaints

North Yorkshire County Council County Rights of Way Section County Hall Northallerton North Yorkshire DL7 8AD	Hull City Council Regeneration & Development RoW Kingston House Bond Street Hull HU1 3EN
City of York Council Public Rights of Way Officer 9 St Leonards Place York YO1 2ET	Countryside Access Team East Riding of Yorkshire Council County Hall Beverley HU17 9BA
<p><i>For North Yorkshire only within the National Park:</i> Park Officer, North York Moors National Park Office The Old Vicarage Bondgate, Helmsley North Yorkshire YO6 5BP</p>	

Further details of Rights of Way problem reporting are available on the Area web site.

Notes on the Programme

General: All members are welcome to attend any walk, irrespective of their Group membership. Group designation letters are given in the list of Group Secretaries in Appendix I.

There is also a **Young Persons (20's and 30's) Group** who arrange a separate programme of walks and social events. For details contact the **GYBO Group Secretary, Kelly Temple** at info@gybo.org.uk or visit their web site at www.gybo.org.uk

Distances are approximate; usually the maximum to within one mile. Walks in the North York Moors tend to be more strenuous than others. L against the distance means that the walk is linear, using public or other transport. Payment of fares is the responsibility of the individual walker. Where public transport is used, please check timetables in advance.

Meeting Points are specified by place names and Ordnance Survey Grid Reference (See below).

The abbreviations used in the table are listed at the back of the programme. Some of car parks specified as meeting points are subject to a parking charge. If there is any difficulty finding the meeting point then help can be obtained by contacting the Group Secretary. Alternatively, if you have access to the Internet, then help is available on the walks page of the Area web site (www.eastyorkshireramblers.org.uk) - click on the

link in the 'more details' column for any walk to display a map showing the start location.

Maps

The following Ordnance Survey maps (1:25000 scale) cover the areas of most walks:

EXP OL26 North York Moors (W)

EXP OL27 North York Moors (E)

EXP 290 York

EXP 291 Goole and Gilberdyke

EXP 292 Withernsea and Spurn Head

EXP 293 Kingston upon Hull & Beverley

EXP 295 Bridlington and Driffield

EXP 299 Ripon and Boroughbridge

EXP 300 Howardian Hills and Malton

EXP 301 Scarborough, Bridlington and Flamborough Head

EXP 294 Market Weighton and Yorkshire Wolds Central

Using the National Grid. The Grid divides Great Britain into 100km. Squares. Each square is designated by a pair of letters, which in our case can be TA, NZ or most often SE. Each 100 km square is divided into ten 10km squares which in turn can be divided into ten 1km. Squares (the square grid on Ordnance Survey maps). The location within each of the 100km squares is then given by two series of three digit numbers. The south west corner of each 100km. Square is designated with the co-ordinates 000 000. The first group of three digits of the grid reference indicate how far east, and the second group of three digits indicate how far north the designated location is from this reference point. A further explanation of the National Grid together with an example is to be found on every OS map.

Contacts for further information: Details of any walk may be checked with the relevant Group Secretary (see back page for contact details) or on the Area web site.

No responsibility can be accepted if the information proves to be incorrect. Details of additional walks are published in Area News and on the Area website: -

www.eastyorkshireramblers.org

