

Leisurely and Moderate walks

Use this risk assessment as a starting point to think about your specific walk. Be mindful of any additional hazards.
Review and share your plan with walkers on the day – and make changes if you need to.

What are the risks or hazards?	What could happen and who could be harmed?	How we manage the risks
Lack of confidence and/or skill	Leaders are stressed and overwhelmed	- All new walk leaders complete introductory training and make the most of opportunities to develop their skills - Peer support available from more experienced leaders - Leaders only lead within their capabilities
	Walkers are exposed to unnecessary risks	
Too many or too few people walking in the group	Leaders are stressed and overwhelmed	- A leader may decide to cancel the walk if there are too few people, or too many people with insufficient helpers (e.g. co-leaders or mid-markers for a big group. Refer to recommended ratios) - Advertise any limits on group size (and booking information, if needed) in advance - Where needed, limit invitations to people with a specific shared experience (e.g. women-only walks, cancer support groups)
	Walkers are exposed to unnecessary risks	
Walkers act recklessly	Walkers put themselves and others at risk	- Share information with walkers in advance to establish clear expectations and responsibilities - Give a walk briefing before setting off, to share your plan and expectations - Communicate with walkers throughout the walk
	Leaders are stressed and overwhelmed	

Leisurely and Moderate walks continued.

What are the risks or hazards?	What could happen and who could be harmed?	How we manage the risks
Weather	Walkers are exposed to extreme cold, heat, or wet	• Check the weather before the walk • Let people know what to wear and what to bring if the route is over exceptional ground for Essex. • Make contingency plans • Set an appropriate pace and take breaks as needed • Stay alert to changing conditions and adjust plans accordingly
Getting lost	Walkers get lost	• Where possible, recce the route a week or so in advance – or carefully plan with good local knowledge, guidebooks and/or maps • Leaders are familiar with the route and contingency plans in case changes are needed • Pre-register phone with 999 emergency text service • Know the hours of dusk and darkness, and plan accordingly
	There is a communications blackout	
Terrain	Walkers trip or fall, resulting in injury	• Leaders complete training on Preventing & Managing Incidents • Check for muddy/slippery/steep sections when planning • Advise walkers of terrain and suitable footwear in advance if the route is over exceptional ground for Essex. • Recommend use of walking poles if appropriate • Make contingency plans, to draw on if needed in response to the group & conditions • Zigzag up/down any steep sections – highlight benefits of walking poles • Offer reassurance to nervous walkers & take adequate breaks • Adjust plans on the walk if needed
Unsafe/unstable geographic features or obstacles (e.g., water, tides, rock fall, overhangs, and fallen trees)	Walkers trip or fall, resulting in injury	• Follow any local warnings or signs and advise walkers to keep away from sheer drops/edges • Check paths are suitable for a group to use safely and make changes if necessary • Avoid crossing any significant water features – use bridges or other recognised water crossing points • Check the tide times
	Walkers get into difficulty and drown	

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What are the risks or hazards?	What could happen and who could be harmed?	How we manage the risks
Livestock	Walkers are at risk of injury from livestock	• Cross fields with livestock calmly and quietly, keeping the group together and any dogs on a short lead (releasing the dog if charged by cows). Deviate from the right of way if necessary (this is a legal right). • Follow the Countryside Code (England & Wales) and Scottish Outdoor Access Code (Scotland) • Leave gates and property as you find them
	Property is damaged	
	The wider public are at risk of injury from escaped livestock	
Roads	Walkers are at risk of road traffic accident	• Maintain single file on any road sections without footpath/pavement • Plan route to avoid busy roads where possible • Check for suitable crossing places • Consider wearing Hi Viz vests at front and back of group where walk requires significant main road walking
	Other road users are at risk of accident	
Losing walkers	Walkers could get left behind/lost	• Regular headcounts and communication with the group • Don't allow group to stretch out too much • Remind all walkers to look back at any corner/change of direction to ensure people behind know the route to take • Appoint a backmarker and exchange mobile numbers before start of walk • Communicate with group throughout the walk • Walkers should carry a whistle to attract attention of group if lost
Accident or medical emergency	Walkers require first aid or medical attention	• Ask walkers to complete and carry an In Case of Emergency (ICE) card containing details of relevant health conditions • Leaders complete training on Preventing & Managing Incidents • Know how to contact the emergency services • Ensure mobile phone is fully charged, and consider carrying a power bank • Carry a first aid kit – and extra supplies/layers to keep people comfortable while waiting for help to arrive • Walkers should carry a whistle to attract attention in the event of an emergency • Pre-register mobile phone for emergency SMS (see ICE card for details)