

Ramblers Requirements

Guidance for walk leaders is given in the Ramblers Walk Leader Handbook. The following notes are intended to clarify how the principles in the handbook should be interpreted for our walks.

Principle 1 We work as a team

You no longer need to complete a risk assessment form for each of your walks. Instead you can refer to our WHR Risk Assessment Form, select the relevant walk grade and assess your walk against the listed risks. If necessary make a note of any additional risks that are specific to your walk.

Principle 2 We lead within our capabilities

Make use of the expertise of the experienced walk leaders in our group to help you develop your skills.

Principle 3 We plan walks in advance

We recommend that all walks are recced.

Even recced walks can change overnight – trees can fall, animals appear in fields and paths can be closed. So be prepared to make changes if unexpected conditions are encountered on the walk.

Principle 4 We help walkers come prepared

Our version of the Information for Walkers document is published on our web site and walkers are advised to read it when they book on walks. Walk specific information should be included in your walk submission. If necessary you can use the WhatsApp group or email walkers for any late news.

Principle 5 We manage group size

The ratios listed in the handbook are recommendations only and for our walks are over cautious. Set the number of walkers you are comfortable leading in your walk submission. There will usually be several experienced walk leaders on your walk and they can be consulted or asked to assist if help or advice is required. Use a backmarker for larger groups, backmarkers can be any Ramblers member.

Our Ambles are rated Easy and the remainder of our walks are Moderate.

Principle 6 We prepare for emergencies

Our booking system will always give you a full list of the attendees on your walk.

We encourage walkers to carry an ICE card or programme emergency contact details on their phone and this is stated in the Information for Walkers document .

We encourage, but not insist, leaders have first aid skills and we provide occasional training courses.

Our walks do not require Route Cards or recording of plans with someone at home.

Principle 7 We pack the right kit

The kit required for our walks is limited. We do not expect walk leaders to carry extra food, drink or clothing. These are all the responsibility of walkers.

We will supply the following:

- First aid kits to those who have completed first aid training
- Hi-visibility vests and back pack covers

We recommend a phone is carried at all times and you should be familiar with our recommendations on contacting emergency services (see our web site).

Navigation tools will be as you see fit for your walk and capabilities.

Principle 8 We're flexible and adaptable

We recommend that you lead from the front. The group can be effectively monitored by observing the group and backmarker and checking in with them at break points. Experience has shown that leading from within the group often leads to fragmentation and difficulty in keeping those at the front on the correct track and in sight.

Our Guidance

The following are things that we have found from experience, will help make your walk a success.

- You do not need any special qualifications to be a walk leader though you do need to be able to read a map or follow instructions in a guide book. The ability to use a compass is useful but not essential. If you go wrong (and most of us do sooner or later) members of the group can always help you out.
- When selecting a venue, leaders should do their best to ensure that car parking facilities are adequate both from the standpoint of capacity and security. Car parks with lots of comings and goings are less attractive to thieves. However, it is recognised that there may not be a suitable alternative, and there can be no definitive guidance on this. If there is a Parking Charge this should be mentioned in the walk description in the programme.
- It is recommended that new walks are recce'd before being submitted for the walks programme, to ensure that the walk is suitable for the group, plan coffee stops, comfort breaks and lunch stops. It is advisable to complete a further recce as near as possible to the walk to confirm that conditions have not changed.
- It is a good idea to recce your walk with another person to give you support on the recce and that person could also act as backmarker on the day of the walk.
- If you have planned your walk using the OS Map app and there are other experienced leaders on your walk, share it with them to make it easier for them to help with navigation or leading if required.
- Always appoint a backmarker unless the group is very small.
- Before setting off give a brief outline of the walk pointing out any hazards such as busy road crossings, possible causes of difficulty such as steep hills or particular points of interest.

- Make any newcomers welcome. This includes non-Ramblers members. They are allowed 3 trial walks before being expected to join and our aim is to encourage them to do so by making them feel welcome.
- Take care not to walk faster than the group can manage and keep checking to see that everyone is keeping up. Occasional stops are useful to allow stragglers to catch up and also to allow your backmarker to let you know of any problems. A whistle can also be useful to allow your back marker to attract your attention during the walk.
- Let the group know how long breaks are going to be and give a few minutes warning before moving on again.
- Consider including a lunch stop if your walk is longer than 7 miles.
- Take particular care when crossing or walking along roads. Give advance warning and advice such as walking in single file and ask others to help you in ensuring that everyone crosses safely. Hi-Vis vest are available for difficult road crossings.
- If you are willing, it would be good to take someone on a recce who has never led a walk before. We hope this might boost confidence and encourage new walk leaders.
- Walk leaders must be registered Ramblers volunteers, backmarkers must be Ramblers members.
- The leader is not responsible for first aid but it is a good idea to carry a mobile phone and possibly a basic medical kit though the advice is to be very careful when attempting to give first aid. Accidents are mercifully very rare but if in doubt always call for professional help. The Ramblers provide insurance cover for walk leaders.
- All incidents must be reported. Contact the group secretary or walks organiser for a form. If the incident is of a serious nature it should be reported to The Ramblers national office on 020 3961 3300 during office hours or 07854 848083 outside office hours as soon as possible. A serious incident is defined as posing 'immediate danger to life where outside help is required to resolve the incident'. This includes: incidents where 999 has been called, urgent medical help is required, urgent help is required to get the party/member to safety, evacuation of party/member by emergency services or death of a participant.
- Ramblers encourage all groups to accept dogs on walks. You may however restrict your walk to 'Registered assistance dogs only'. If you wish to apply this restriction you must state this on your walk submission form. If you consider that your walk is unsuitable for assistance dogs then you will need to contact the Ramblers Delivery Team for guidance (email volunteersupport@zendesk.com).
- Control and behaviour of dogs on our walks remains the responsibility of the owner and not you. The owner is expected to follow the guidance provided in our [Information for walkers](#) notes. If you are happy to accept dogs and are contacted by dog owners then you should refer them to the notes and make sure that they understand the specific requirements that apply to dogs.
- If you wish to provide extra details or promote your walk consider using our Facebook page. If you would like to issue a notice about your walk (for example to warn of conditions, clarify a meeting place etc) you can contact the Walks Organiser to post a

notice on our web site, post a message in our WhatsApp walks group or send an email to all members who have elected to receive email communications from The Ramblers.

- Photo's are often taken on our walks and these may appear on our Web site, Facebook page and in WhatsApp. Walkers are informed of this in our 'Information for Walkers' guide and also in the booking confirmation email they receive. They are asked to inform the walk leader if they do not want to appear on any published image. If this occurs on your walk you need to inform the walks coordinator (or deputy) immediately after the walk and they will check any published images. If there are individual photographers on the walk who may upload their photos to WhatsApp they should also be informed. Please note that WhatsApp messages can only be removed within 2 days of being published.