



Walk Leader Checklist

Your quick guide to leading great group walks

Our guiding principles

At the Ramblers we have eight guiding principles that help us lead safer, enjoyable and welcoming walks.



Being a great walk leader

We love walking and there's something special about sharing it with others. That's why group walks are so important. As a walk leader there are certain things you must do.



Plan and assess the risks in advance

We have example risk assessments according to walk difficulty to help you get started.



Adapt plans to local circumstances

Adopt or adapt our resources in a way that works for you to manage any specific considerations for your walk.



Share your plan with walkers

You can do this in your welcome briefing at the start of the walk before setting off.



Make changes if you need to

Stay alert to your surroundings and walkers and take a dynamic approach on the day.

Keep your plans proportionate for the nature of your walk, the conditions and the group you're leading. And remember, once you've got the basics covered, it's all about making it your own – you're one of the reasons people love to join your walks!

Before the walk

Choose a route

- Consider the location, length, timing and whether it will be a linear or circular route.
- Consider the season, terrain and points of interest.
- Ask yourself, do I have the knowledge, skills and ability to lead this walk safely?

Recce the route

- Do your recce close to the day of the walk, if possible.
- Check timings, rest and toilet points, escape or alternative routes, access restrictions and mobile phone coverage.
- If not possible – use maps, guidebooks, local knowledge and online tools to plan.

Assess the risks

- Refer to the relevant Ramblers risk assessment – or local risk assessment if your group already has one.
- Think about specific hazards on your walk, and what you can do to manage the risk.

Decide on your group size

- Refer to the Ramblers recommended leader:walker ratios.
- For larger groups, work together with a backmarker or co-leader.
- To manage numbers you may choose to use a booking system to let people know how to join.

Share information with walkers

- Let walkers know what to expect, including any specific kit to bring.

Get ready

- Pack everything you need for the walk – first aid kit, fully charged mobile phone, food, drink and appropriate navigation tools are all recommended.
- Know how to contact the emergency services and get help if you need it.
- Text Register to 999 to get recorded with the emergency SMS service.
- Download the free OS Locate app.

Before setting off:

- Check the weather forecast – have you packed the right kit?
- Bear in mind conditions at low levels can be very different to those on a high peak.
- If the walk you're doing is remote, make sure you fill in a **route card** and leave it with someone at home. If you don't return at the expected time, they can raise the alarm.



On the walk

Give a walk briefing

- Give everyone a warm welcome.
- Share information about the walk, and any hazards on the route so that walkers can keep themselves and others safe.
- Ask walkers for their emergency contact details.
- Remind walkers to follow the Countryside Code or the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

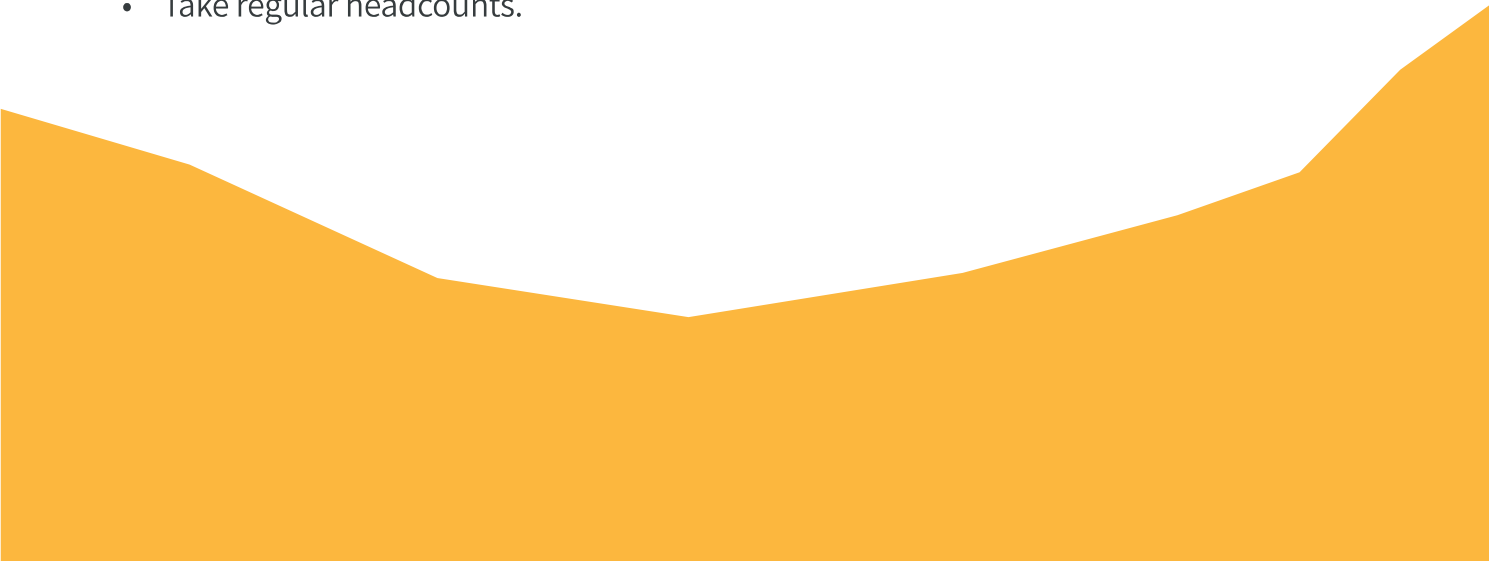
Set the right pace

- Keep in sight or communication with your backmarker at all times.
- Check in with the group to make sure everyone's OK and have regular breaks.
- Take regular headcounts.

Stay flexible

- Keep an eye on the weather, the conditions, the time and your group.
- Adapt your plans and make changes when needed.
- Ask for help if you need to – there's usually a wealth of experience in your group.

Have fun

- Most of all, have a great time with your group while out on the walk!
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After the walk

Say thank you

- Let new walkers know when the next walk is, and how to join the group or stay in touch.
- If you're going to a post-walk social, make sure everyone feels welcome to join.

Report any incidents

- If you lead for Ramblers or Ramblers Wellbeing Walks and an incident occurs, complete and return an Incident Report Form to **incidents@ramblers.org.uk**



Thank you

Thanks to people like you, walkers across Great Britain get to enjoy more than 100,000 group walks with Ramblers every year.

Thank you for helping to open up the outdoors for everyone.

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