

THE RAMBLERS LIVERPOOL GROUP



GUIDELINES FOR LEADERS 2025

**This is a guide for members leading
walks for the Liverpool Group**

May 2025

INTRODUCTION

- Thank you for agreeing to lead walks for our Group. Without members willing to lead we could not have such a varied programme to suit a wide range of walking abilities.
- The main purpose of this handbook is to provide specific guidelines for leading walks for the Ramblers Liverpool Group. As you know we offer several different walks - Recreational and Social mostly on Thursdays or Saturdays; local Tuesday walks; Sunday walks.

The **general guidelines** which follow **are applicable to all our walks**. There are also specific guidelines for each type of walk.

- All walk leaders are registered Volunteers, and can therefore access guidance notes and training on the Ramblers HQ website. To access these resources set up your Ramblers Account by using your membership number and email address.
- There is a wealth of information and advice about all aspects of walk leadership on the Ramblers website. You are asked to study that advice and follow the very accessible leadership training on **www.ramblers.org.uk**. This training is equally appropriate for both experienced as well as new leaders. Ramblers now require all new walk leaders to undertake this training, which is entirely online, easy to follow and well-presented. It can be completed in a couple of hours.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL TYPES AND LEVELS OF WALK

Planning the route

- Wherever possible choose only public rights of way, permissive paths and open access land
- Avoid road walking where possible
- Arrange to carry out a recce of your planned route preferably about four to two weeks prior to the walk date

The Recce

A risk assessment must be completed before leading a walk to record hazards and plan steps to stay safe. There is a risk assessment form on our website which is a useful checklist

- Walk the whole planned route
- Keep a record of times, landmarks etc on the route
- Find and note suitable places for toilet/comfort breaks, lunch and drink stops etc
- Note any problems e.g. blocked paths, especially difficult or dangerous terrain, and identify safer alternatives
- At the end of the recce make sure you have recorded the total mileage/kms and ascent plus any specific information to be passed on to walkers on the day
- Identify any possible ways of shortening the walk if necessary

On the day of the walk

N.B. Remember you as leader can refuse to take anyone on your walk if you are concerned either about the suitability of their clothing/ footwear or their ability to complete the walk at the required pace

- Under 18s must be accompanied on the walk by an adult with parental responsibility at all times
- Introduce yourself to the walk group
- Welcome everyone especially any new members or visitors
- Say a few words about the proposed route
- Ask for and introduce a back marker
- Before setting off count the number of walkers in your group
- Explain that everyone should walk between the leader and the back marker
- Stress that everyone must stay behind the leader
- Explain that all members of the group share a duty of care, that they should look out for the welfare of others and inform the leader of any concerns

- Starting out, set the pace of the walk, which must be your pace and not dictated by any other member of the group
- Ideally, you should be able to see the back marker at all times and if necessary wait until the whole group is in sight
- When road walking is used the leader should remind walkers that it is their responsibility to walk safely. If there is no pavement, walkers should face the oncoming traffic following the leader in single file. They should use safe crossing points identified by the leader.

Problems and Incidents

- Problems may vary, but the guiding principle is care of individuals and the whole group. All walkers have a duty of care to other walkers
- To prevent a member of the party getting lost, the leader and the back marker should ideally be in sight of each other. The leader will have reminded the whole group of their duty of care to look out for each other and inform the leader of any concerns
- No-one should leave the walk unaccompanied and without the leader's knowledge
- In the event of someone needing First Aid, ask if anyone in the group has First Aid or medical qualifications. All members are advised to bring their own First Aid kit
- Attend to the immediate needs of the injured person. If necessary text or call for help: 999 or 112
- Ensure the safety and welfare of the whole group
- Ramblers training for leaders has sound advice on all aspects of such situations
- After any injury or incident details must be recorded on the Ramblers official Incident Form available from **www.ramblers.org.uk** or from the Ramblers Secretary

RECREATIONAL WALKS

Refer first to the general guidelines for all walks

Planning the route

- Plan a route of about 5 miles
- Check times of trains and/or buses for start and end of walk
- Use of public transport can provide linear or circular walks
- Planning will usually include ending at a pub or restaurant

The Recce

- Check that the route is suitable for the group
- Check timings of walk, especially if lunch is booked
- Book places at pub or restaurant

On the Day of the Walk

- Liaise with pub/restaurant on arrival

Problems and Incidents

- Refer to the general guidelines for all walks

TUESDAY WALKS

Refer first to the general guidelines for all walks

Planning the route

- Plan a route 7-10 miles 11/16 kms long
- Check times of public transport at the beginning and end of route

The Recce

- Read the general guidelines for all walks
- Check the route suitable for walkers
- Note any general issues: busy roads, steep ascents, stiles, narrow paths etc
- Note any places on the route where walkers may cut the walk short and access public transport
- Send an email to the Tuesday Walks Secretary for distribution to walkers if there are any major issues with the walk which may affect members' decision to participate

On the Day of the Walk

- Check the details of the public transport to be used on the walk in case alterations need to be made
- Be at the meeting place to greet walkers unless you have advised the Tuesday Secretary of another arrangement
- Request that any walker advise the leader in confidence before the start of the walk if they have any health issues which might affect their safety
- Inform walkers of places where they can exit the walk after informing the leader or back marker
- Back marker and leader to wear high viz jackets
- Back marker to inform the leader of any issues with the walk

- If severe weather is forecast the walk leader should decide if the walk goes ahead or is changed. They should inform the Tuesday Walks Secretary of their decision who will then email the Tuesday walkers and post the information on the Liverpool Ramblers' Facebook page. The leader or nominated person will be at the original meeting point to inform any walkers who had not seen the notifications
- If severe weather develops during a walk the leader will make the decision to alter/ cut the walk short

Problems and Incidents

- Refer to the general guidelines for all walks

SUNDAY WALKS

Refer first to the general guidelines for all walks

Planning the route

- Always liaise with other leaders prior to the walk date through the walks co-ordinator, who is indicated with an * asterisk in the programme, to avoid route duplication. Contact details of other leaders can be obtained from the Rambles Secretary whose details are in the Liverpool Group Programme (the booklet)
- Walks should start on the route as stated in the programme
- Identify where the coach will be parked
- Wherever possible use only public rights of way, permissive paths and open access land
- Avoid road walking as much as possible
- Consider an escape route to shorten the planned route should this be necessary

The Recce

- Record the distance, total ascent of all the climbs and assess the type of terrain to provide an accurate assessment of your walk. If Ramblers' grading is used, ensure the grade falls within the appropriate points range (see The Ramblers Liverpool Group Programme)
- Write up your route description for circulation on the coach to include: distance, ascent, degree of difficulty, type of terrain and any other hazards. Request that any walker advise the leader in confidence before the start of the walk if they have any health issues which might affect their safety
- Make two copies of the map with the route outlined on it and direction of travel indicated. One copy will be kept on the coach during your walk

On the Day of the Walk

- Remember you as leader can refuse to take anyone on your walk if you are concerned either about the suitability of their clothing/footwear or their ability to complete the walk at the required pace
- Inform the group that they should be back on the coach 10 minutes before the scheduled departure time
- Ensure that everyone is back safely and take the group back to the coach or within sight of the coach. You should aim to finish your walk at least 30 minutes and no more than 2 hours before departure

Problems and Incidents

- In the event of a severe weather warning walk leaders for that day will consult with each other before the day and advise the appropriate Ramblers Secretary if a walk should go ahead or has to be cancelled
- For coach journeys experiencing serious delay once underway, the person in charge of the coach, the three walk leaders on the day and the coach driver will discuss and decide how best to respond to the situation
- On rare occasions the coach may arrive late. On your recce you will have considered possible ways to shorten your walk. For example, if the walk is circular, walk for half the time available and then walk back along the same route
- If your walk is badly delayed and you are likely to be late back to the coach, try to contact the Ramblers Secretary to agree a course of action

- If an individual is lost, find out when and where the person was last seen by any other party member.

Main party to wait and 4 strong competent walkers to look for the lost person. Searchers should shout or blow a whistle. Listen for a response. Keep to main tracks and remember where the main party is located. After a pre-arranged time, not exceeding 30 minutes, the searchers should return to the main party.

The main party to continue with walk. Ideally, four strong competent walkers with map reading and compass skills should discuss the route to the coach with the leader and continue to search for the lost person in pairs.

After 30 minutes, if the lost person is not found, then the four strong competent walkers continue with the walk and hope that the person has either set off for the coach or met up with the main party. Possibly notify the Police after considering:-

- a) The ability and competence of the lost person
- b) Do they have a map and compass? Do they know how to use them?
- c) The terrain.
- d) The weather.

WALK GRADING

Many walk leaders use a **points system** to identify the exact level of the walk:

1 point for every mile (1.6 km) and 1 point for every 500 ft of ascent (152 metres)

Extra points can be added for fairly rough terrain or scrambling.

A Walk = 18-24points (maximum distance 18 miles/28.9 km)

B+ Walk = 14-19 points (maximum distance 15 miles/24.1 km)

B Walk = 12-17 points (maximum distance 13 miles/20.9 km)

C Walk = 7-11 points (maximum distance 10 miles/16 km)

Resources

- Ramblers website <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking>. Many walking routes are available to members on this site
- To report problems with a footpath use the Ramblers Pathwatch App or use Ramblers website to report online. This will alert both The Ramblers and the local highway authority: <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking-hub> dealing with problems on public paths
- Coach company Selwyns emergency phone number: 01928 643088
- Locate me! App has a compass and links to OS maps
- What3Words App
- British Red Cross: First Aid App
- Register your phone with 112. See details on You Tube: Lyle Brotherton 112.

To register simply text the word register to 112. You will be sent a text message, simply read it and reply with the word yes. This enables you to contact the emergency services by text when you are not able to get a mobile signal.

- OS Maps App: there is a cost involved
- Komoot App: useful for mapping out and route ideas
- Peaks - <https://peakdistrictwalks.net/all-walks-directory/>
- Lakes - <https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/visiting/things-to-do/walking/routes-and-maps>
- Yorkshire Dales - <https://www.walkingenglishman.com/dales.htm>
- If you purchase an OS Map 1:25 000 in order to lead your walk Liverpool Ramblers will reimburse you if you provide proof of purchase and have led the walk

