

Galtee Walking Club

Health and Safety Plan Statement and Strategy

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Outline of Health and Safety Responsibilities

Hill walking, climbing and rambling are activities that can be dangerous and may result in person injury or death.

Participants should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

The Galtee Walking Club acknowledges their responsibilities in ensuring the safety of all participants. It will take every action necessary as is reasonably practicable in ensuring the safety, health and welfare of all participants and those involved in club events including members of the public. It is paramount that club members need to be conscious of personal safety of themselves and the people around them at all times.

Health and Safety procedures

The club committee has identified a number of potential serious incidents that may occur throughout the course of an organised walk. The following procedures have been devised in responding to such occurrences.

First Aid/ Medical

The club avails of the services of Civil defence and South Eastern Mountain Rescue services (semra).

Walkers should inform club facilitators of any medical condition, injury or medication needed, be sure to bring any medication required

It is incumbent on walkers to have the required level of fitness/training done in order to safely participate/finish their chosen walk.

Actions on serious incidents

Broken or dislocated limb:

The injured party will summon help to identify the closest facilitator.

The facilitator will take control and phone for help as appropriate.

If ambulance access cannot be achieved, transport such as a jeep quad or tractor and trailer will be used.

A follow up report will be prepared by the event organisers, which may involve a brief as soon as all facts have been gathered.

Cardiac Arrest / Heart Attack:

Any person nearby will assist and raise the alarm.

The facilitator will take control and phone for help as appropriate.

Ambulance will be contacted and dispatched to the area from where the casualty will be transported to the nearest hospital.

A follow up report will be prepared by the event organisers which may involve a brief as soon as all facts have been gathered.

Persons Lost or Disorientated

The persons disorientated will be required to stop and take shelter.

The facilitator will take control and phone for help as appropriate.

Facilitators will assist their return to safety.

The Country Code for Walkers

Respect the people who live and work in the Irish countryside. Respect private property, farmland and all rural environments. Do not interfere with livestock, machinery and crops.

Respect and, where possible protect all wildlife, plants and trees.

When walking, use the approved routes and keep as closely as possible to them.

Take special care when walking on country roads.

Leave all gates as you find them and do not interfere with or damage any gates, fences, walls or hedges.

Do not enter farmland if you have dogs with you, even on a leash, unless with the permission of the landowner.

Guard against all risks of fire, especially near forests.

Always keep children closely supervised while on a walk.

Do not walk the Ways in large groups and always maintain a low profile.

Take all litter home - leaving only footprints behind.

Keep the number of cars used to the minimum and park carefully to avoid blocking farm gateways or narrow roads.

Minimise impact on fragile vegetation and soft ground.

Take heed of warning signs - they are there for your protection.

Report any problems encountered along the route with markers, signage, stiles or any other comments to the NWWAC/ISC office.

Walk Route Planning

To get the most from your day in the mountains you will probably wish to spend some time in advance deciding on the most suitable route. Factors to be considered include:

1. Distance and height gain of route, and time required for completion.
2. Amount of daylight available and estimated time of return.
3. Size, fitness and experience of group.
4. Nature of the terrain, and possible conditions underfoot (eg. ice).
5. Possible escape routes.
6. Weather forecast and poor weather alternatives.

You may or may not wish to prepare a detailed route card, but at the very least you should let someone know your intended route and your estimated time of return. Do not forget to notify this person of your safe return! If you leave word of your intended route, it also goes without saying that you should stick to your plan, unless, of course, you feel that this will place you or your party at risk.

When selecting the best route line during your walk there are many obvious dangers to be avoided, such as cliff tops in windy weather and icy slopes, however you should also be conscious of less obvious hazards. This includes such things as grassy slopes and lichen covered rock slabs, which may look innocent, but which can be every bit as dangerous as the more obvious hazards, particularly in wet weather. It is a good idea to get into the habit of asking yourself how great are the chances of a slip, and what the likely consequences of that slip might

be. Remember that a simple slip is the cause of a large proportion of serious mountain accidents.

If you are on a slope where rocks could potentially be dislodged, keep your group bunched tightly together so that any dislodged rocks do not have the opportunity to build momentum, but can be stopped immediately by the person behind. Be particularly aware of the danger you may pose to other groups below you, and of the danger you may be facing from careless groups above you. If a rock is accidentally dislodged, the standard procedure is to shout "Below!" as a warning to all others.

Safety advice for participants

There are many risks associated with participating in outdoor pursuits and participants need to be aware of these risks and take sensible precautions.

Weather changes occur the higher you go on the hills, the temperature drops 1 degree for each 100 metres of ascent. The wind is stronger up there 2 to 3 times the speed of the valleys. Also there is more risk of mist and cloud on top, which can lead to poor visibility. Weather conditions can change in minutes therefore participants need to be prepared and equipped to cope with changing conditions. It is advisable to be aware of pending weather conditions in advance. If you have Internet access we recommend

www.AccuWeather.com

In cold and wet weather the greatest danger is hypothermia or exposure. This occurs where the body temperature is chilled to

a life threatening level and could be aggravated by wind chill factor. To avoid this make sure you have enough warm clothing extra food and plenty water.

In warm weather the principle hazards are sunburn, windburn and dehydration. Sun hats, sun cream and water can prevent serious sunburn and heatstroke.

Don't underestimate the amount of water you need doctors recommend 1.5 to 2 litres of water a day even for an ordinary active lifestyle. If you are walking strenuously or weather is hot you will need substantially more water. Avoid drinking unboiled and unpurified water from streams. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. Still mineral water or tap water is adequate, fizzy drinks are not recommended, as they take longer to drink if you need to hydrate quickly.

Personal gear

Walking boots with good ankle support are essential. Always wear suitable clothes for outdoors and carry spare warm clothes at all times. Jeans and Cotton should not be worn, if they get wet they will not dry causing loss of body heat and energy and possibly contributing to the onset of hypothermia. A waterproof jacket, over trousers, warm hat and gloves are essential irrespective of the weather starting out.

Rucksack requirements

Water

Food and hot drink.

Some high energy snacks such as chocolate, glucose sweets or energy bars.

Spare clothes (in plastic bag in rucksack)

First aid kit

Whistle/phone

Blisters

Blisters are simply a result of friction. They can make a walk a painful/miserable experience. In order to prevent blisters these simple steps should be followed.

Wear walking socks correct size

Wear comfortable good fitting worn in walking boots

Quickly remove foreign bodies, from your socks or footwear.

Keep your toenails trimmed.

Act immediately if you feel any friction or discomfort as blisters can form very quickly (blister plasters essential)

Emergency Procedure

STOP and THINK!

If you are lost, try to work out where you are on the map – take your time and don't panic, as this will affect your judgement.

If you need to cut your walk short, take time to plan a safe way down.

If your problem occurs late in the day it may be unwise to continue and you may be forced to stay out for the night.

Emergency Bivouacs:

Seek shelter – even very nearby there will be sheltered spots. Keep warm – put on all spare clothing before you get too cold and insulate from ground.

Get into a bivvi bag, and get everyone to huddle together for warmth.

Share out food and drinks throughout the night and try to keep morale up.

An exhausted group forced to spend the night is likely to be suffering from hypothermia by morning.

Emergency bivouacs are at best long, cold, uncomfortable and worrying. Avoid them by starting your walk early and by begin aware that fatigue can lead to carelessness at the end of a hard day.

In case of an accident:

Look after the victim first, administering First Aid if necessary and keeping victim as warm and dry as you can.

Assess if you can handle the problem yourselves or if you need help.

If you can manage without help, take time to plan a safe route down and take your time in getting there to avoid further accident.

If you need help plan, take time to plan the next steps carefully:

Decide on exact plan for getting help. Stick to this as far as possible.

~ Who will stay with the victim ~ Best place to go to report accident and safest route

Write down the information you wish to give to rescue team:

~ Exact location, time of accident, injuries sustained, name of victim/s and person/s with them.

When you reach a telephone dial 999 and ask for Mountain Rescue. Pass on the information carefully and stay there until help arrives.

Remember that in case of an accident people get confused and panicked so it is important to stop and think. Carefully plan what steps you will take. Write down essential information as in the confusion vital facts can be forgotten.

All Rescue Takes Time

The internationally recognised distressed signal is six blasts of a whistle (or flashes of a torch) followed by one minute's silence. This sequence is repeated. The answer is three blasts or flashes followed by one minute's silence. This sequence is repeated.

Risk Assessment

Associated Hazards

1. Traffic and public roads

Controls

1. All participants to adhere to instructions given by club facilitators.
 2. Uneven rocky/rough tracks and undergrowth/slippery surface
 3. Bridges /stiles/stone walls, steps etc.
 4. Electrical fencing/barbed wire
 5. Animals/Livestock
 6. Weather (expect 4 seasons in 1 day)
2. All participants must have appropriate footwear.
 3. Exercise caution.

4. Exercise caution.
5. Be aware and avoid.
6. Be prepared. Carry appropriate gear, food and liquid.

Club Insurance

One free walk only applies initially before joining the club. New members in the club are insured from the time they pay their subscription.

Non-members are welcome to participate on a maximum of 1 session / walk /climb. If they wish to carry on they must join the club.

The Insurance year runs from 1st of November to the 31st of October.

Mountaineering Ireland's Insurance is not Travel Insurance. Mountaineering Ireland's clubs, club members and individual members are insured for (1) public liability (€13,000,000) and (2) **limited** personal accident cover.

(1)Public Liability: This is injury or damage to third party property or persons. All club members are covered while participating in any of the above activities on a worldwide basis either on a club activity or on an individual activity. Public Liability also provides cover for:

Professional Indemnity, which protects (for example) the role of leaders and coaches in the event of a loss occurring to another.

Libel and Slander Protection, which protects the club and its Officers in the event of being sued for unintentional libel/slander, e.g. emails, bulletins, website

Directors and Officer Protection: This covers club officers / members of committees in their capacity as decision makers on club business.

Cover is also provided specifically for:

Legal Defence Costs

Child Welfare, Protection and Vulnerable Adults Cover

(2)Permanent Injury Personal Accident Cover

Personal Accident cover provides members with a fixed benefit if you are unfortunate enough to suffer a permanent injury while engaged in one of the activities covered by our policy.

Cover provides for:

Death €7,496

Loss of Limbs and/or Loss of Sight in one or both eyes and/or
Loss of Speech and/or

Loss of Hearing in both Ears** €74,963

Loss of Hearing in one ear** €18,740

Permanent Total Disablement* €74,963

Medical Expenses sustained in 3 or 4 €5,000

Emergency Dental €750

* The benefit amount shall not be applicable to Insured Persons aged 80 years or over

** The Benefit Amount and the maximum amount payable shall reduce by 50% in respect of Insured Persons aged 75 years or over.

Activities Covered

Cover under Mountaineering Ireland's Insurance Scheme provides for:

Clubs' activities;

Training, coaching, instruction;

Participation in meets, gatherings, competitions;

Attendance by club officials, instructors, leaders, teams and members in external meets and competitions sanctioned by the club and / or Mountaineering Ireland; or whilst representing the club, in the participation of the sport or activity; or in the necessary administration and running of the club; and

Path repair and maintenance with hand held tools.

Club arranged presentation ceremonies, social events; or whilst representing the club at such events arranged or organised by third parties.

The activities are noted as mountaineering, hillwalking, climbing, walking, bouldering, scrambling, path repair and maintenance, alpinism, ski mountaineering, ski touring, coasteering, canyoning, kayaking, mountain biking.

Note:

The use of kayaks and mountain bikes is restricted to the incidental use when they are used to enable a member to reach a particular starting point or route.

Other Recommendations

We would recommend members take out the following;

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC, formerly E111) - this is free and provides you with necessary healthcare while on a temporary stay in all the countries of the European Economic

Area, and in one other country, Switzerland. The European Economic Area includes the 25 member states of the European Union and three other countries.

Travel and Activity Insurance - Mountaineering Ireland members benefit from access to the British Mountaineering Council's Travel and Activity Insurance Scheme.

Reporting Incidents / Accidents

All incidents involving injury or damage to a member or a third party must be immediately reported to Mountaineering Ireland and the insurance brokers.

Any incident / accident should be reported as soon as possible but must be submitted within 28 days.

To submit an incident / accident report, please, email **info@odon.ie**.

Exclusions

Commercial activity and professional guiding

Persons over the age of 80 are excluded from Personal Accident cover

Personal Accident claims arising from sickness/illness (as opposed to accidental injury which is insured), HIV, drugs, etc. Exclusions under the Civil Liability cover include any accident involving a motor vehicle, injury to employees and the usual war and nuclear clauses.