

Emergency Situation Guidance

It is not possible to anticipate every possible emergency situation which could arise. However, there are some guidelines we can follow to try to keep everyone on our walks as safe as possible.

Prevention

The best way to deal with an emergency situation is not to have one in the first place! The TBR Mountain Safety Policy and the Ramblers Walk Leaders' Guidance cover this in more detail, but here are the main points:

- **Walk Leaders' Guidance – Keeping the group together**
 - Recce the walk beforehand.
 - Appoint a back marker.
 - Tell everyone on the walk to stay between you and your back marker and to inform one of you if they need to leave the group.
 - Lead at a pace with which everyone can keep up.
 - Make sure you maintain communication with your back marker.
 - Pause at each junction in paths to make sure the whole group knows where to go.
 - Count the group at the start of the walk and count regularly through the day.

- **Mountain Safety Policy – Preventing illness or injury**
 - Make sure you and all other participants have the appropriate clothing, food and water to safely take part in the walk.
 - Carry a map, a compass, an emergency shelter, a first aid kit a foil blanket and a torch.
 - If weather conditions deteriorate to the point that you don't feel comfortable navigating, then turn back.
 - If a group member is becoming over tired, ill or very cold, turn back.

It is always better safe than sorry, so if you have any doubts about leading a walk on the day or during the walk, then it is better to cancel the walk or turn back part way through than carry on and risk injury or getting lost.

If the weather forecast is not looking very good or there are likely to be challenging conditions, i.e. heavy snow, then you may want to consider keeping in touch with someone who is not walking that day, for instance, a committee member. They could then contact the emergency services if they had not heard from you by a certain time, i.e. sunset.

Injuries

The priority in any emergency situation is safety. If someone becomes injured or ill, the following may help:

- **First Aid:** The Ramblers UK have produced first aid cards which can be obtained from your Walks Support Officer. The most important points are:
 - Move the person as little as is possible.
 - Keep talking to them. Tell them what you are doing and try to keep them as relaxed as possible.
 - Keep them warm. People with injuries often suffer more complications afterwards from hypothermia than from their actual injuries, so this is vitally important. If possible, try to get a blanket, jacket or survival bag underneath the person. Cover them on top as well. A storm shelter raises the temperature due to the inhabitants breathing and cuts the wind chill factor.

- **Getting Help:** Having made sure the injured person is as comfortable as possible, try to get help for them by phoning 999. Be prepared to give an accurate position of the casualty including a grid reference where appropriate. If you don't have mobile phone signal, then send a small party of people to find phone signal. **Never send anybody away from the group on their own.** Ideally the people sent should know the area. If not, they should have a map and a compass with them and should know how to use them. Make sure you arrange whether those people will come back to the group or will make their way back to the start point.
- **Getting to Safety:** Two or three people should stay with the injured person until help arrives. One or two people should be delegated the duty of getting the rest of the party back to the start point. Again, no one should be sent off by themselves and each group of people should know the route or have a map and a compass and know how to use them. Make sure the people staying with the injured person have enough clothing to stay warm. Ideally they should all be able to fit inside the emergency shelter.
- **Communication:** When you are back at the start point (or as soon as you have phone signal) check that all groups have made it home safely. Once you know that everyone is safe, get in contact with a member of the committee in order to report the incident.

Getting Lost

If one person or a few people in the group have become lost, here are some options to consider:

1. Send a search party back along the path to look for the lost person.
2. Take the whole group back along the path to look for them.
3. Wait for the person at an obvious point in the walk (i.e. a prearranged lunch spot).
4. Complete the walk and wait for the person at the start point.

As a general guide, if you have not found the person within an hour, you should call the emergency services. If the person is potentially vulnerable or has a serious health condition, then you may want to call for help sooner.

If the whole group has become lost, here are some options:

1. Stop moving! If you don't know where you are, you will just get more lost by continuing.
2. Check if anyone in the group has a GPS or grid reference finder on their phone. You can then use your map and compass to navigate back to the planned route or to the start point.
3. If you know the rough area you are in, you could find the nearest road on the map and, using a compass, navigate that general direction. Once on the road, you should then be able to walk to the start point safely or get help from a passing car.
4. If you really don't know where you are at all and there are no nearby roads, then you will need to stay where you are until the visibility improves and you are able to see where you are. Hopefully, if you have followed the preventative guidelines above, this will never happen.

As above, never let anybody leave the group on their own and make sure someone in every group or search party knows the area or has a map and compass and knows how to use them.