



Risk Assessment Sheet

Walk Locations: Generic locations in the Cairngorms National Park

Date: Effective from January 2010

Assessment carried out by: Alan Melrose

HAZARD	WHO MAY BE HARMED?	HOW IS RISK CONTROLLED?	WHAT TO TELL WALKERS AT THE BEGINNING AND DURING WALK.
Aching joints/collapse of participant (e.g. high blood pressure).	Anyone, but particularly those with health or fitness problems.	General enquiry regarding wellbeing before start of walk.	Notify Walk Leader/s if feeling unwell during walk. Take breaks if necessary.
Slips/trips on uneven and/or muddy ground.	Everyone.	Highlight potential hazards before and during walk. Wear suitable footwear. Slow down over difficult terrain. Have alternative route option.	Lookout for uneven ground. Highlight any concerns regarding ability over difficult terrain to Walk Leader/s.
Damaged surfaces, or obstacles, on roads, pavements, tracks or paths, (e.g. kerbs, raised or broken drain covers, potholes etc.).	Everyone.	Highlight potential hazards. Wear suitable footwear. Slow down/detour to avoid if possible. 'Buddy' system.	Front walkers to notify others of potential hazards encountered along route. 'Buddy' system.
Protruding vegetation (e.g. bushes with thorns/low branches).	Everyone.	Highlight potential hazards.	Front walkers to notify others of potential hazards encountered along route. 'Buddy' system.
Steps or stiles.	Walkers who are unsteady, use sticks or frames, or those with pushchairs.	Have alternative route for that part of walk. Give assistance if asked, and appropriate.	Highlight concerns if steps/stile unsuitable for ability/mobility. Slow down on steps



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Traffic, crossing roads or using railway crossings.	Everyone.	Awareness of traffic/speed limits on route. Care and vigilance while crossing roads or railways. Use only authorised crossing points on railways.	Advising group of potential traffic density and speed limits along route. Take care and be vigilant when walking near traffic, or if crossing roads or railway lines.
Walking on the roadside (where no pavements exist).	Everyone.	Only walk on roads when traffic is likely to be light. Keep well in to the side of the road. Walk on the right-hand side of the road, facing oncoming traffic, and in single file. For large groups, walk on the left, with front and back markers. Use Hi Viz vests.	Group briefing on how you expect the group to behave if part of the route requires roadside walking. Remain vigilant for vehicles. 'Buddy' system.
Becoming lost or disorientated.	Everyone.	Walk Leaders to ensure familiarity with routes used.	
Hills and inclines.	Walkers who are not used to exercise, or with health problems.	Have an alternative for this part of the route. Slower pace. Observe group for signs of discomfort or distress.	Advise group of any steep ground (up or down) that may be encountered on walk. Highlight concerns to Walk Leader/s. Advise Walk Leader/s if feeling unwell during walk.
Walker exhaustion.	Walkers.	Choose route and distance appropriate to ability of group. Observe group for signs of discomfort or distress. Stop for rest breaks and/or adjust pace. Be prepared to cut the walk short.	Walkers advised of route and distance, terrain, and timescale of walk. Walkers to inform Walk Leader/s if they feel unwell or unable to continue.



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Walkers becoming separated from the group.	Walkers.	Control pace to keep group together. Split group if sufficient Leaders available. Appoint back marker.	Advise walkers not to leave group without informing Walk Leader/s. Identify back marker. Front and back marker to stay in contact. Brief the route.
Insect stings – risk of anaphylactic shock.	Individuals with allergies to bee/wasp stings.	Encourage walkers to disclose serious allergies.	Ask walkers if they have everything they need.
Tick bites – risk of Lyme Disease.	Everyone.	Cover arms and legs if walking through close vegetation (where sheep or deer may be present).	Check for tick bites on return, and remove if found. Consult doctor if any adverse reaction noticed.
Hot weather – risk of exhaustion, dehydration or sunburn.	Everyone.	Advise walkers to carry water bottles, and to use sun block. Ensure suitable clothing, including sun hats. Avoid walking in the middle of the day and/or choose a shady route. Be prepared to cut the walk short if necessary. Recognise symptoms.	Route and expected timescale of walk. Checklist of suggested items to carry/wear. Allow them to decide if they are adequately prepared for the conditions, and whether to continue. Advise as necessary.
Cold, wet or windy weather – risk of hypothermia or frostbite.	Everyone.	Ensure walkers are adequately dressed. Consider routes that offer some shelter. Control pace and keep group moving. Walk Leader/s to carry spare clothing/emergency blanket etc. Recognise symptoms.	Check walkers prepared for conditions, and aware of hazard. Route and expected timescale of walk. Allow them to decide if they are adequately prepared for the conditions, and whether to continue. Advise as necessary.



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Snow, slush, ice.	Everyone.	Ensure suitable footwear and clothing. Careful selection of route. Be prepared to postpone/cancel walk.	Check walkers prepared for conditions, and aware of hazard. Route and timescale. If proceed, may be cut short.
Windy weather – risk of flying debris, falling branches, being blown over.	Everyone.	Avoid paths through heavily wooded areas. Select sheltered routes. Be prepared to postpone or cancel the walk.	Check walkers prepared for conditions, and aware of hazard. Be vigilant for falling debris, and fallen obstacles on path.
Deteriorating weather conditions.	Everyone.	Check weather forecast. Watch for visual indications of weather change. Be prepared to shorten route.	
Open water.	Everyone.	Highlight potential hazard areas on route. Avoid areas in bad weather when paths may become wet and slippery, or flooded.	Take care if walking near open water.
Assisting with recovery of injured group member.	Everyone.	Control the group, and allocate responsibilities. Appoint responsible walker, if no back-up Walk Leader, to escort group safely to end-point. Carry mobile phone/ know where phone available if emergency services required. Familiarity with route (road names, access points, mobile coverage).	Stay with group until directed otherwise by Walk Leader/s.



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Other land users (cyclists, other walkers, dogs, golfers, land owners etc.).	Everyone.	<p>Be considerate of others using the area.</p> <p>Be vigilant for cyclists/farm traffic etc.</p> <p>Give livestock a wide berth, avoid damage to crops, and leave gates as you find them.</p> <p>Familiarity with Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC).</p>	<p>Identify other types of users likely to be encountered.</p> <p>Ensure gates closed when appropriate.</p>
Intoxication	Individual, group, and anyone assisting.	Support Worker in attendance. Careful route selection. Seek further advice.	No intoxicants allowed on walk (to applicable groups). Check participants fit to attend.