**NEWPORT OUTDOOR GROUP – SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR WALK LEADERS**

Please follow this guidance, so we all enjoy the walk. Need help or advice ? Ask a committee member.

**Equipment.**

* Make sure you are properly equipped – see the Newport Outdoor Group – Safety Requirements for Walkers document.
* Make sure that all those on the walk are properly equipped.

**Before the Walk**.

* Unless you are an experienced leader, please walk the route in advance to check that you know the route and to assess any particular safety hazards.
* Inform the Group members, before the walk, by e mail, on Meet-Up and at Group event(s) of …
* A brief advertising sentence, describing/selling the event.
* Meeting time and place.
* The walk starting point.
* The length, difficulty, terrain and the equipment needed.
* Refreshments available and food / drink to take on the walk.
* Who to contact for further information.
* Complete the Group risk assessment form.

**On the Day of the Walk.**

* Again, inform the walkers, before leaving Newport or the Hostel, of the relevant information above.
* Assess whether all walkers are properly equipped and whether they are capable of completing the walk.
* If the answer is no to either question, you should suggest that they do not come on the walk.
* If it is a mountain or other serious walk, you should politely *insist* that that the member does not come on the walk.
* An ill-equipped walker or one who is barely capable of completing the walk, could endanger the safety of all on the walk.
* Before starting walking, remind the walkers to …
* shut all gates,
* not to go too far ahead of the leader,
* inform the leader if someone wants to leave the walk before the end and if someone wants to ‘disappear behind a bush’ !.
* AND inform walkers of the high and medium risks of the risk assessment.
* Perform a count of all walkers at the *start*, at the *end* and at stages during the walk.
* appoint a ‘back marker’ if there are more than, say, 15 walkers.
* Make sure you can account for all walkers throughout the walk.
* Monitor progress of the walkers during the walk.
* eg Is someone having difficulties ; is the group spread out too far ; how are new members doing ?
* Consider altering your plans in the light of event, etc.
* eg if the weather turns bad ; if the walk is likely to finish very late.
* You have authority, as the leader of the walk …
* If a dog presents a particular hazard, eg during lambing time, you can tell a walker not to bring the dog on the walk.
* If walkers disagree with the route, you can continue with your planned walk, unless conditions deteriorate or there is some other hazard.
* However, do accept constructive advice and help.
* Consider altering your plans if, for example, the weather turns bad.
* If a walker(s) want to leave the walk, make it plain that they become solely responsible for their own safety.
* Take regular breaks and choose the best available places for stops.
* eg in the shade if it is very hot, in a sheltered place in the winter or in bad weather.
* Walk at a pace such that the walkers keep together.
* Over the whole walk, it is necessary to walk at the pace of the *slowest* walker.
* In mist or fog it is important to keep the walkers close together.
* If someone goes too far ahead, ask him/her to stay close to the group.
* Follow the Highway Code, when walking on roads.
* See the NOG – Safety Requirements for Walkers document. Ensure its advice is followed.
* NOG has ‘hi-vis’ waistcoats ; take at least 2 on the walk, one for the front and one for the back of the group.
* Torches are essential equipment for the whole of Greenwich Mean Time and in the early or late periods of British Summer Time.
* Try to avoid or minimise walking on busy roads that do not have a pavement.