

WALKERS RESPONSIBILITIES

PON / Feb 2023

All walkers must read this document.

1. WALKERS PERSONAL RISK

Walkers should note that hillwalking carries a danger of personal injury or death.

Those who walk with the Lansdowne Walking Group do so at their own risk and are responsible for their own actions and they should also ensure that their actions do not compromise the safety of others.

Guests are very welcome. A walker who brings a guest should issue them with this document and should assume a responsibility for the behaviour of their guest.

2. INSURANCE

The Lansdowne Walking Group does not provide insurance cover. Walkers should arrange their own cover as individuals. [Mountaineering Ireland's policy will provide Civil Liability and (limited) Personal Accident insurance to walkers. See their website www.mountaineering.ie for details].

3. RECREATION

- Walking is about fresh air, exercise and rapport with your fellow walkers.
- Make it your business to talk to different people on the walk (especially newcomers).

4. CLOTHING, FOOTWEAR & EQUIPMENT

Clothing

- Be prepared for a change of weather – always carry an extra layer. Carry waterproof jacket and waterproof over-trousers.
- Jeans are not good, because if they get wet, they stay wet for ages → best to wear trousers that dry quickly.

Footwear

- On rough ground and steep slopes, ankle support is required → wear boots rather than shoes.
- To lessen the risk of slipping, boots should have an anti-skid sole (good tread pattern and a slip-resistant material).
- Tennis shoes/runners are liable to slip on slopes, wet rocks, clay, and grass - and do not give ankle support on rough or sloping ground.

Equipment

- Bring water, food, a knapsack and a mobile phone (keep it on and available to answer). A whistle and a torch are advised.
- To treat cuts and bruises carry some dressings, blister plasters and antiseptic cream.
- Injuries to the legs can occur (eg. pulled muscle). It is advisable that somebody in the group has a fabric support tube.

5. PREPARATION

- Know the weather forecast. Know what time it gets dark.
- Be on time at the meeting location, normally a cafe. **Be ready to leave the cafe when the leader says to go** – have your visit to the toilet complete before this!
- **Be dressed in your walking clothing when you arrive (including socks)** - you should only have to put on boots and jacket.

6. RISKS

- The most common walking injuries are due to slips and falls. Pick out footholds where your boot is not liable to slip. Take extra care on sloping wet surfaces.



- The tips of walking sticks can cause injury. Keep the tips to your front and pointed to the ground. On an upward slope, make sure your sticks don't stab backwards.

7. WALKING AS A GROUP

1. All walkers in the group have a duty of responsibility towards the leader and should not undermine her/his authority. Communicate problems to the leader and support the leader.
2. Do not leave the group without informing the leader.
3. **The pace is dictated by the leader, not by any other member(s) of the group.** On a group walk you sign up to walk at the group pace, which may not necessarily be your preferred pace.
4. Try not to let a gap open up between you and the person ahead - if it does, be sure to keep the person ahead in sight.
5. Keep a watch on the location and progress of the person behind you. Make sure they take the right direction at junctions or change in trail.
6. *"The group stays together"* –
 - In heavy mist/cloud/fog, this is literal – do not lose visual contact with the person in front and watch for the person behind. In bad situations, shout if contact is being lost.
 - On an easy track, where the route or destination is obvious, walkers can string out more – but note the wishes of the leader.
 - The walkers should stop and regroup at intervals – as per instructions of the leader.
 - Fast walkers: do not break away from the group, unless you have the agreement of the leader.
 - If you are not keeping up with the group, you should –
 - (1) Make the extra effort to do so.
 - (2) After rest periods, be ready to leave with the leaders.
 - (3) If you are still in difficulty, communicate this to the leader.
7. If you are stopping for a "comfort stop", inform the backmarker. Catch up asap.

8. RESPECT FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE

- "Leave No Trace" - Carry away all litter (including orange/banana skins, teabags – they may decompose in time but, in the meanwhile, they are unsightly).
- Leave gates as the group finds them. – open or closed as the case may be. If you have to climb over a gate, do it at the hinged side, to avoid straining the gate.
- Avoid knocking stones off walls and damage to fences.
- Try to avoid erosion of peat/clay/grass surfaces – walk on stone/hard-surface areas or on unused areas of grass (note that once the grass/vegetation cover is gone, the soil can wash away).
- Our walks are unsuitable for dogs.
- Read advice for walkers on websites such as www.mountaineering.ie (Mountaineering Council of Ireland) and www.dublinmountains.ie (Dublin Mountains Partnership).