

## **Red Rope safety issues, checklist and accident prevention final version**

Please remember that on trips and day walks we have not only a group duty of care but also individual responsibility, both for our safety / accident prevention and also comfort and enjoyment.

### **Walks descriptions/grading**

If offering or planning a walk as a group do your best to describe it either from your experience or what you can see from a map or guidebook. Be honest if you don't know. "A 12 km route over Big Hill, via Twee village. Should be back about 4ish. Easy walk" isn't a helpful description to someone who doesn't know the area or their ability. Factors affecting accessibility of a walk are:

- Distance, height gain over the day, gradients, numbers of ascents and descents
- Conditions under foot – paths, tracks, roads, open moor, boggy or stony ground, icy, snowy, river crossings or bridges, exposure on ridges
- The effect of the weather on the choice of route, availability of shelter, short cuts, avalanche forecast
- Size of the group, pace, fitness, experience, tiredness, number of breaks

We should all make our own decisions about whether we can do/enjoy a walk and, if in doubt, ask.

### **Equipment, food and clothing**

Whilst what we take with us is very much a personal choice and most of us try to make our rucksacks as light as possible, it is worth checking, especially with new people, who's got what. So, for instance there should be:

- more than one map
- a group shelter ( or in good summer weather a minimum of a bivvy bag or foil blankets )
- comprehensive first aid kit ( plus individual 1<sup>st</sup> aid necessities )
- Individual spare clothes, food and drink

Make sure any communal stuff is shared out and if the group splits during the day one party doesn't take all the safety gear.

### **On the walk**

Let's look after each other by:

- Pointing out trip and slip hazards such as slippery bridges/stiles, icy patches, hidden holes, other folks' walking poles or ice axes
- Taking breaks to eat and drink, and adjust clothing, and be aware if someone is flagging
- Stopping to read the map or look at your phone - much safer than doing it on the move
- Checking if folk seem unconfident on rough ground or around cows in fields.
- Being aware of what Mountain Rescue teams call the Golden Hours between 3 and 5 when most accidents happen because people may be tired or rushing to get back

Few of us want to get into detailed risk assessments or "elf and safety gone mad" territory. However we can do something about foreseeing most hazards and preventing some incidents.