

FERMANAGH RAMBLERS & HILLWALKERS

CLUB GUIDELINES (updated 2021)

Fermanagh Ramblers and Hillwalkers Club, being totally committed to the safety of its members, considers it good practice to operate in accordance with the following guidelines, which have been produced by the Committee. It is hoped that all Club activities are undertaken within these guidelines in order to ensure the safety and enjoyment of participating members.

SAFETY

Safety covers various aspects detailed below but you must be aware of your personal fitness level and general well-being. Whilst every effort is made by the Club to guarantee the safety of the party it should be understood that each walker takes part in the Club's activities at their own risk and that the Club cannot be held responsible for any mishap or injury how-so-ever caused. Members are reminded that rambling and hillwalking is not without risk. Accidents can happen at any time but more likely if you are tired or not paying attention.

- It is irresponsible to go on a walk if you are unwell or injured. You should select a walk that matches your ability and fitness level on the day. If in doubt, err on the side of caution.
- If you are on medication or suffering from any physical, mental, or other condition that might affect you or the group on the walk, then you must inform the walk leader of it before the walk starts.
- Be careful about foot placement as there is always the risk of concealed holes, loose rocks, slippery ground and soft bog.
- Be particularly careful when descending steep ground and when crossing streams and rivers.
- Stay together on the mountain and resist the urge to spread out, particularly if visibility is poor.

WEATHER

Weather conditions can change very quickly in the mountains and you need to be equipped to cope. The higher up you go the lower the temperature; wind can be 2-3 times stronger than at lower levels and rainfall will be heavier with a higher risk of cloud and mist.

TYPE OF WALKS

All walks are graded on the walking calendar.

Grade 1 - Walks that are generally flat and on tracks, forest or lake shore, 2-3 hours duration.

Grade 2 - Walks that are generally moderate hill walks on open country climbing up to 400 meters in altitude and approximately 3-5 hours duration.

Grade 3 - Walks that are generally fairly difficult mountain walks climbing over 400 meters in altitude, 5-6 hours duration requiring a good level of physical fitness.

PERSONAL GEAR AND EQUIPMENT

Clothing

- **Hill walking boots with ankle support** and moulded rubber soles are mandatory on all walks. They give ankle support on rough ground and good grip on steep slopes. Boots should be big enough to allow for thick walking socks. Gaiters worn with boots help to keep feet and legs dry.
- Lightweight **waterproof/windproof jacket and trousers**
- Breathable T shirt - clothes of wool/woolmix or fleece type are recommended for insulating properties.
- Walking trousers/tracksuit bottoms. **Denim jeans and cotton T shirts are NOT suitable** for rambling/hillwalking (if they get wet they will not dry, causing loss of body heat and energy and possibly contributing to the onset of hypothermia)
- Socks should be wool or woolmix. A thicker sock worn over a thinner liner sock can help prevent blisters.
- Hats and gloves are essential all year round.

What to carry

- **Minimum of 1 litre of water in a hydration bladder or traditional bottle.**
- **A packed lunch and hot drink is recommended for all walks.** Also snacks, including emergency rations such as chocolate, banana, glucose sweets or high energy bars.
- Appropriate size rucksack with liner, a survival bag, personal first aid and blister kit, whistle, torch, spare batteries, spare laces, mobile phone.

- Walking poles - The club recommend the use of a pair of walking poles to aid stability and help reduce pressure on your joints. Make sure you can stow them securely on your rucksack when safety requires both hands to be free.
- In hot weather - sunscreen/lip balm, insect repellent, sunglasses, sunhat, extra water.
- In cold weather - thermal leggings, extra fleece, second hat/gloves, scarf/neck gaiter, extra food.

WALK LEADERS

The walks are led by unpaid volunteer walk leaders who will have checked the route beforehand. The leader has the right to refuse anyone not adequately equipped or anyone who in the leader's opinion is unfit to walk. The leader has the right to extend, curtail or alter the route from that described. The leader sets the pace and walkers are expected to follow this pace. Inform the leader if you're feeling tired or the pace is too brisk for you. If a walker wishes to stop for whatever reason they must inform the leader.

All walkers have a duty of responsibility towards the leader and the group as a whole. This means they must not do anything to undermine the authority of the leader or the safety of the group. Walkers must follow all reasonable instructions from the leader. For everybody's safety and security those starting out together must stay together during the walk.

CASUAL WALKERS

Non-members may participate in up to two walks in any membership year as a casual walker after which they must join the club to continue walking with us. They must be over 18, have a good level of fitness and have the appropriate walking gear. This might suit walkers from other clubs, potential new members and friends of members.

MINORS (under 18)

Membership is limited to those over 18 years of age.

DOGS

Dogs must NOT be brought on walks.

LITTER

Take all litter home, including biodegradable waste. Human waste should be buried 30 meters away from running water. Members should adhere to the 'Leave No Trace' policy.

CARS & ACCESS

The club does not arrange transport however we encourage car sharing. All land is owned by somebody and we use that land with the goodwill of the owner, not with a legal right.

- Park carefully to avoid blocking gates, property and narrow roads.
- Be friendly and courteous when we meet landowners and local residents.
- Take care not to damage property, crops, machinery, stock or water supply.
- Be careful not to damage fences, walls or hedges; these are livestock boundaries and expensive to repair.
- Use stiles and gates where they exist. Leave gates as we find them (open or closed). If no option but to climb a gate then do so at the hinged side.

DEPARTURE TIME & PLACE

The meeting point for all walks is the carpark adjacent to Translink bus station and beside the British Legion Hall in Enniskillen. All walks will set off promptly within five minutes of the appointed time.

Please ask the Walk Leader if you are unsure about any of the above guidelines.