



BOLTON WALKING AND OUTDOORS APPRECIATION SOCIETY RISK ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT

RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH SPECIFIC ACTIVITY

WALK DESCRIPTION: Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal from the Volunteer, Darcy Lever
 RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED BY: Colin Liprot, Club Chair.
 DATE RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED: 11/08/25
 DATE ROUTE LAST COMPLETED: February 2025

PRECAUTIONS OR NOTES SPECIFIC TO THIS ACTIVITY

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Woodland, forests, deadfall, foliage.	Risk of falling trees, branches and deadfall especially in high winds. Risk of minor injuries from branches and thorns.	There is woodland adjacent to or covering paths along most of the route Volunteers will monitor for fallen trees blocking paths, deadfall or other woodland obstacles and provide physical assistance where appropriate.
Livestock and domestic animals. Wild animals.	Risk of stampeding cattle causing injury or distress to all in group. Risk of sheep, cattle and other animals being worried by dogs. Risk of any animals or other dogs exciting dogs in the group. Risk of disease or infection from sheep and deer tick bites. Risk of dogs from outside the group attacking.	This route does not pass through any open fields where sheep or cattle graze. All dogs in the group to be on leads and under close control at all times. Volunteers to be attentive if other walkers approach with dogs not on leads.
Watercourses and bodies of water.	Risk of injury to all members of group due to slips or trips. Risk of death by drowning to all members of group. Risk of becoming cold and wet to all members of group. Participant may experience discomfort due to falling into a ditch, stream or other body of water that is deeper than expected.	There are a number of ponds, streams and ditches adjacent to the route, as well as an extended stretch of canal. Volunteers to continually remind participants to avoid edges and be aware of their surroundings.
Road and Farm Traffic	Risk of collision between participants and vehicles. Risk of dogs being "spooked" by vehicles.	There is very busy road traffic around Darcy Lever and on Hall Lane. Volunteers will remain attentive and offer advice to participants when crossing or walking along roads, including advice to keep right facing traffic. Roadside footpaths to be used where possible.
Difficult terrain, such as wet grass, mud, uneven terrain, tree roots, bog.	Risk of injury to all members of group due to slips or trips. Participant may become distressed if they are not confident crossing certain terrain. Participant may experience discomfort due to falling into bog that is deeper than expected.	This route uses very good, well surface paths and tracks. Some sections are uneven and may be muddy. Volunteers will advise participants of any particular difficult sections.
Stiles, gates, barbed wire, fences and other boundaries.	Risk of injury due to slips and trips. Risk of injury due to sharp objects. Risk of Tetanus due to sharp metal objects. Risk of damaging clothing due to sharp objects.	All boundaries are open or gated, there are no boundaries that require climbing. Participants should not need to be close to barbed wire during the activity.

GENERAL RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH ALL WALKING ACTIVITIES

PROCEDURE FOR ALL BWOAS WALKS

Safety briefing by volunteers at the start of activity and/or leading up to any hazard will outline any areas where care must be observed, and advice participants to be aware of any implied risks caused by the hazard.
 Volunteers to carry suitable mapping, two-way radio and first aid kit and make themselves familiar with route plan and Risk Assessment.
 Volunteers will provide advice and physical assistance where possible and where appropriate.

RISK	POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS	PRECAUTIONS TO REDUCE OR PREVENT RISK
Participant becoming split from group.	Participant wandering into danger while unsupervised. Participant becoming distressed. Other participants becoming cold or distressed while walk leader searches.	Group numbers should be 1:8 volunteer:participant ratio and MUST NOT exceed 1:12. Volunteers to remain alert and observant. Regular regrouping points and "head count". Clear advice to be given by volunteer/s if the group needs to wait in a safe place and stay together while a hazardous obstacle tackled or road crossed on an individual basis.
Navigation error leading to group getting lost.	Group may encounter unperceived hazards. Participants may become distressed.	All volunteers will carry adequate mapping and route information, and a two-way radio. The routes for all BWOAS activities have been previously completed in full by at least one volunteer.
Illness, injury or inadequate levels of fitness leading to a participant being unable to complete the activity. Pre-existing medical conditions causing problems for a participant.	Participant may experience pain, discomfort, distress embarrassment. Participant may require medical assistance. Participant may decide to leave the group of their own volition, as per Terms and Conditions, and then become lost or subject to a worsening condition. Other participants may become cold or distressed should leader need to take time to seek medical assistance or accompany participant to a safe location.	All advertised information about the activity will include information of how strenuous the route is, including distance, ascent gained and expected time to complete. Booking process requires participants to agree to carry their own personal medication and must accept responsibility for ensuring they are fit enough to attend based on advertised information. All volunteers will carry a first aid kit and will remain attentive to all participants around them, checking for signs of fatigue or distress. Safety briefing by volunteer/s at the start of activity will identify all volunteers to participants. Volunteers will ensure a sensible pace that is manageable by all members of the group.
Snow or Ice	Risk of injury to all members of group due to slips. Risk of collision between participant/s and vehicles.	Activities will be cancelled or an alternate route offered if dangerous icy conditions are expected. Volunteers will provide advice and physical assistance where possible and where appropriate. Booking process requires participants to agree to wear sturdy footwear and dress appropriately for the weather. Volunteers to exercise extra attentiveness around traffic.
Moorland or Wild Fire	Risk of smoke inhalation to all members of the group. Risk of getting trapped in an area due to spreading fire.	In the event of volunteer/s being made aware of any moorland or wild fires in the area that the activity is taking place, volunteer/s will liaise with Planning and Admin Committee Members and advise of cancellation or reschedule of the activity, or an alternative route or activity will be offered.
Sun and heat.	Risk of sunburn or sunstroke to all members of group.	Booking process requires participants to agree to dress appropriately for the weather.
Stiles, gates, barbed wire, fences and other boundaries.	Risk of injury due to slips and trips. Risk of injury due to sharp objects. Risk of Tetanus due to sharp metal objects. Risk of damaging clothing due to sharp objects.	Safety briefing by volunteer/s at the start of activity and/or leading up to any hazard will outline any areas that damaged stiles, gates and barbed wire will be encountered, and instruct participants to be aware of any implied risks caused by the hazard. Volunteers will provide advice and physical assistance where possible and where appropriate.
Participant suffers allergic reaction. Participant suffers asthma attack Participant suffers epileptic or other fit.	Participant will experience discomfort. Participant is likely to become distressed. Participant may require medical assistance.	Booking process requires participants to agree to be responsible for carrying their own personal medication. Volunteer/s will alert emergency services in the event of an emergency.
Encountering a member of public who is injured or distressed.	Participants becoming distressed or in danger. Member of public may be in danger.	Regardless of the circumstances, the first priority will always be to ensure the safety and wellbeing of participants. Volunteer/s may assist the member/s of public where possible and where appropriate.
High Winds.	Risk of injury due to being blown over. Risk of falling trees, branches and deadfall.	Activities will be cancelled or an alternate route offered if dangerous high winds are expected. Volunteers will continually risk assess any activity where woodland is encountered during high winds.
Heavy Rain.	Risk of injury due to slipping on wet grass or rock. Risk of flooding and watercourses becoming dangerous to cross.	Activities will be cancelled or an alternate route offered where appropriate if dangerous heavy rain or flooding is expected. Booking process requires participants to agree to wear sturdy footwear and dress appropriately for the weather.
Mist, Fog and Low Cloud.	Risk of navigation errors due to poor visibility. Risk of collision between participant/s and vehicles.	All volunteers will carry adequate mapping and route information, and a two-way radio. The routes for all BWOAS activities have been previously completed in full by at least one volunteer. Volunteers to exercise extra attentiveness around traffic.
Lightning Strike.	Risk of participant/s becoming distressed. Risk of severe injury or death caused by lightning.	Activities will be cancelled or an alternate route offered if storms are expected. Volunteers will direct the group back to the start/finish point if an unexpected storm begins close by during an activity.
Nightfall.	Participant may get separated from group due to impeded visibility. Risk of navigation errors due to impeded visibility. Risk of collision between participant/s and vehicles due to impeded visibility.	Booking process requires participants to agree to carry a torch during all activities. Safety briefing by volunteer/s at the start of activity will remind participants that they should have a torch on their person. All volunteers will carry adequate mapping and route information, and a two-way radio. Volunteers to exercise extra attentiveness around traffic.
Communication in the event of an emergency.	Time in raising the alarm may be costly to a casualty. Participants may become cold or distressed while volunteer/s attempt to contact emergency services.	Activities to take place in areas with good mobile telephone reception, where possible. All volunteers will carry adequate mapping and route information, and a two-way radio.