

Risk Assessment for Field Meetings

Kent Field Club

16/02/26

This risk assessment provides a guide for minimising the risk of injury or disease arising from field meetings held by the Kent Field Club. It is based on the reasonable assumption that people attending field meetings have some experience of visiting the countryside, that they understand many of the common hazards involved, and that they know how to deal with these.

Nonetheless, it is important to recognise that field meetings may attract people with little experience of the countryside, and that, in any case, the Kent Field Club owes a duty of care to people who attend meetings. Leaders of meetings should therefore have regard to the action points listed below.

Key

		Seriousness		
		1 – minor injury	2 – moderate injury	3 – serious injury/death
Frequency	1 – rare	1	2	3
	2 – occasional	2	4	6
	3 - frequent	3	6	9

Scores (**in bold**) provide a system for ranking hazards in priority order. The higher the score, the greater the need to take action.

Description of hazard	Frequency	Seriousness	Score	Actions or precautions needed
Accidents caused by site hazards, e.g. - Roads, vehicles or heavy machinery - Cliffs, deep water, pits, areas prone to flooding - Uneven, boggy and slippery ground - Overhanging branches - Poisonous or irritant plants/fungi, adders, biting flies, etc.	2	3	6	<p>The leader should follow instructions or pass on warnings from the owner or manager of the site.</p> <p>The leader should give consideration to any particular hazards associated with the site, and give necessary instructions to the group at the beginning of the meeting.</p> <p>On sites with major hazards, the leader should check routes beforehand and plan to avoid (or remove) hazards wherever possible; such sites would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Quarries or other sites with steep and high cliffs- Working industrial sites

- Hidden obstacles/flytipped material, etc.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites where the group will cross or be close to busy roads <p>The leader should be aware of the location of all group members at all times, and maintain a check on safe behaviour.</p> <p>Consider carrying a throw-line if working close to deep water for an extended period.</p> <p>Where hazards become apparent during the meeting, the leader should ensure that everyone is aware of the hazard and knows how to behave to minimise risk.</p>
Inclement weather (rain, floods, cold, ice, snow, strong wind) causing accidents or hypothermia, or falling branches/trees which could cause injury	2	3	6	<p>Be prepared to cancel the meeting if the weather could make it dangerous or particularly tiring, or if people are not suitably dressed for the weather conditions. Shorten the route if necessary – leader should be aware of safe, appropriate short-cuts where present.</p> <p>Avoid woodlands and steep cliffs in high winds.</p>
Hot weather causing heatstroke/dehydration	3	1	3	<p>Give general instructions on suitable clothing, and the need for sunblock and drinking water, in the meetings programme.</p>
Getting cut off by the tide/drowning	1	3	3	<p>Do not plan walks in tidal areas without thorough knowledge of the area and tides.</p> <p>Check tide times and allow plenty of time to complete the walk in safety.</p> <p>Avoid areas of soft mud.</p> <p>Do not enter fast-moving or deep water; if unsure, do not enter the water. Do not work in or around water alone.</p>
Diseases (e.g. Weil's disease, Lyme disease)	1	3	3	<p>Where the meeting involves contact with water, the leader should ensure that everyone is aware of the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cover any cuts or wounds - Wash hands before eating <p>Where there is a risk of tick bites (on sites with sheep or deer), ensure people know how to reduce the risk of tick bites and Lyme disease transmission.</p> <p>Publish advice on avoiding disease in the Kent Field Club newsletter and on the Kent Field Club website. The leader should familiarise themselves with the information about disease on the website.</p>

Unexploded ordnance	1	3	3	Liaise with site managers on military sites where there has previously been live-firing. If an item that appears to be unexploded ordnance is encountered, do not approach or disturb, move away and contact site manager for further instructions. Alert emergency services if advised to do so.
Livestock (cattle, horses)	1	3	3	Be aware of likelihood of grazing livestock on some sites. Check for warning signs. If crossing a field with livestock, keep to marked paths, do not approach livestock and keep dogs on a leash. In particular, give space to female livestock with young, and bulls. Do not separate females from young. If livestock begin to show agitated behaviour, remain calm, move away quietly and exit the field as soon as is safe.
Forestry operations	1	3	3	Leader should liaise with site manager about any planned operation. Take note of any displayed signage. Do not approach work taking place or interfere with any equipment. Alert workers to the presence of meeting attendees.
Accidents requiring First Aid	2	1	2	It is recommended that the leader has access to an appropriate First Aid Kit. This may be left in a car at the meeting point where the meeting will stay close to this point. Where more distance is to be covered, the first aid kit should be carried with the group. The leader should carry a mobile phone..
Accidents caused by the condition of participants or inappropriate clothing/footwear	1	2	2	Give general instructions on suitable clothing/footwear in the meetings programme. At the start of the meeting, the leader should remind people of any particular hazards for which appropriate clothing may be needed, in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very uneven ground or steep slopes - Wet conditions where waterproof footwear might be needed - The likelihood of rainy or very cold weather conditions
Dogs - Possibility of attack by uncontrolled pets	1	2	2	Be alert to presence of dogs. Avoid unfamiliar dogs, especially if showing unusual behaviour. Avoid provoking any dogs who approach, and behave calmly. Ensure all dogs with meeting attendees are under control.
Golf courses – injuries from golf balls	1	2	2	Avoid routes that pass across golf courses unnecessarily.

				Keep to marked footpaths in golf course areas. Leader should liaise with site managers where appropriate. Follow warnings and be alert to presence of golfers on the course. Alert golfers to the presence of meeting attendees if appropriate.
Crop spraying/agrochemical exposure	1	2	2	Leader should liaise with site managers about any planned operations in survey sites. If crop spraying is taking place (or has recently taken place), avoid farm machinery and avoid handling plants and other material from sprayed areas.
Personal safety and security (crime)	1	1	1	Be alert to surroundings and stay in a group where possible. Carry a mobile phone and report suspicious or criminal activity to the police.