

## **CHESTER RAMBLING & HILL WALKING CLUB**

### **CLUB EMERGENCY GUIDELINES**

#### INTRODUCTION

A number of different events and circumstances can bring about an emergency on a walk. The procedures below cover the main points. A combination of common sense, knowledge, cooperation and good leadership will optimise the probability of the best possible outcome. All club members are advised to read the Club's "Guidelines for Rambles' Leaders". These provide guidance to identify hazards before walks and outline procedures to prevent or reduce the risk of an accident. They promote personal responsibility for all walking members with emphasis on the specific duties of walks' leaders.

Risk assessment is the identification of hazards, deducing their potential for harm if the worst occurs and taking steps to reduce the likelihood of that happening. The Guidelines for Rambles' Leaders provide a good basis for procedural risk control for all club walks.

In the event of an emergency occurring on a walk the following procedures should be followed when and where appropriate.

#### INJURY OR SERIOUS ILLNESS

Assess injury /condition.

If help is needed note exact location, ie description and grid reference in remote areas. Ring 999, ask for Ambulance if on or near a road or Police if Mountain Rescue is required, and be prepared to give details

Ensure rest of party is in a safe position. Assess and call on the expertise within the party, especially qualified First Aiders.

Administer instant aid. Ensure airways are unobstructed. If not breathing start mouth to mouth resuscitation and administer chest compressions if there is no pulse (2 breaths, 15 compressions).

Stop serious bleeding by applying pressure and raising the injured part if a limb.

Keep patient warm and dry, and conscious if possible.

Ensure injured party is in a safe location, but assess whether it is safe to move the patient depending on likely injuries, eg whether he/she has collapsed or suffered an accident. If considered safe and the patient is breathing but unconscious, place in the recovery position. If considered safe and beneficial for any patient move to a sheltered spot. Use a survival bag if practical. Rucksacks can be used to provide insulation from the ground. If spinal injury is suspected do not move.

A seriously ill person may be carrying medication that they require.

Be prepared to send for help if 999 call cannot be made. Choose two members of the party and agree the best route.

Monitor the situation at regular intervals whilst waiting for help. Look out for rescue team, helicopter, mountain rescue party on foot. Be ready to signal them. The leader should be prepared to give an account of the incident, the current situation and all first aid administered.

The general state of the rest of the party can deteriorate in emergency conditions ie cold, hunger, stress, lack of daylight etc. and it may be sensible to split the party before professional help arrives. A minimum of two people should stay with the injured party.

## GETTING THE PARTY BACK TO SAFETY

This is the responsibility of the leader.

Check the party's resources; assess the capabilities, available leaders, maps, compasses, and knowledge of area. Help could be as much as 3 hours away. Make plans to return to base safely. Consider changing routes to speed up process.

Members of the party must be prepared to help and take instructions from the leader.

An injured or ill person not requiring a rescue must be accompanied back to base by two capable members of the group.

After a rescue the party may or may not decide to continue the walk. This is a leader/deputy decision.

## A LOST MEMBER OF THE PARTY

On the mountains or hills this may need the help of the emergency services. If the missing person has not been relocated before the party returns to base, a professional rescue may be needed. In this case call 999 asking for Police and explain the difficulty and location.

When a member of a party realises they have separated from the rest of the group, that person should stay where they are for a reasonable length of time. When a leader is informed that a member of the party is missing, they should stop and assess the situation by questioning the back marker, establishing when the missing person was last seen, where the route may have caused a deviation etc.

Try using a whistle to attract the attention of the lost party.

Send a small party back to the point where the person was last seen  
The use of torches, whistles, mobile phones can be useful in these situations.

If a member of a party is not found and the terrain and location of the walk is assessed not to be of serious risk to the lost person, then a professional rescue should not be necessary .

The lost party after some time may decide that they won't be found. He/she should attempt to return to where the cars are parked, by phoning for a lift, stopping a car or walking.

N.B. The appointment of a back marker, and the communications between the back marker and the leader should prevent losing a person on a walk. All members of the party have personal responsibilities and a rough knowledge of where the walk is taking place and where the cars are parked are part of those responsibilities.

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