

## **Aycliffe Fell Walking Club**



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# **SAFETY GUIDANCE NOTES FOR CLUB MEMBERS**

## **1. Be Prepared**

**Wear Appropriate Footwear** – Fabric boots and trainers are fine for riversides, field paths and low moorland areas in summer but, for steep hills and rock-strewn high moorland, leather boots afford much more protection against twisted ankles. They are essential in waterlogged terrain and winter snow. In wet, muddy or wintry conditions, gaiters will also help keep legs and feet warmer and drier.

**Wear or Carry Protective Clothing** – Lightweight waterproofs & wind-proofs should be carried on all outings but in winter should be exchanged for heavier garments, such as a Gore-Tex jacket & over-trousers.

**What to Carry** – Always take a rucksack or daysack and carry sufficient food and drink for the planned walk. Spare clothing, a long-life food pack and a whistle should always be carried, for use in emergency! A compass and the relevant map(s) should be carried too! In winter add a head torch, survival bag and micro-spikes! If tackling mountains in winter carry an ice axe too.

## **2. Essential Equipment**

Year Round: In winter months (November to March inclusive), add the following:

Stout footwear Head torch or hand torch (plus spare battery)

Rucksack or Daysack Micro-spikes (to slip over boots in icy conditions)

Food and Drink (more than needed) Survival Bag (in case you are benighted in the hills)

Lightweight Waterproofs (jacket & pants) Ice Axe (for use when hill-walking in snow & ice)

Spare clothing (wrapped in bin liner) Extra Warm Clothing

Long-life, food pack (emergency rations) Extra Food Rations (inc hot drink in a Flask)

Whistle (to attract attention in emergency)

Map & Compass (& know how to use them) and

Walking Pole(s) (optional) replace Lightweight Waterproofs with Heavy Duty type.

## **3. On the day of the walk**

It is recommended that all walkers should be proficient in the use of map and compass. If you are not or do not have a map, stay in the company of someone who does. Make it clear to them that you lack proficiency (or a map) and that you wish to walk with them.

Let the Secretary and others know which walk you intend to do. Never walk alone. If you change your route plans after setting off, ensure you let other club members know your intentions.

If you introduce or bring along a new member it is your responsibility to educate them with regard to the minimum equipment required, as above. Look after them on the walk, ensuring they are not left behind or become separated.

#### **4. The Coach Route**

The route taken by the coach to and from walk start and finish points is decided by the Secretary when planning walk routes and arranging transport. There will be no diversions from the pre-determined route, except in exceptional circumstances. However, walkers can, by prior arrangement and if safe and convenient, be dropped off anywhere along the coach route.

The coach will park at the preselected and identified end-of-walk hostelry and, due to government legislation on driver's hours, will depart on the homeward journey at 6.30 pm (6.00pm winter) prompt. If you think you may arrive later than 6.30 pm (6.00pm winter), follow the emergency procedure below.

#### **5. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

##### **If you become Lost or Separated**

Don't panic. Stop and think. Don't simply press on regardless. Look and listen; are there other club members nearby? When and where did you become separated, what was your last known position?

If you need to attract attention use your whistle: 6 blasts, wait one minute then 6 more.

If you cannot find other members and you are high in the hills, try to find your way downhill.

If you are carrying a mobile phone remember that many valleys block reception, use the phone before descending. If you cannot get through to speak to someone, send a text.

Follow a path or, remembering that water always runs downhill, descend beside a stream if possible. Beware of dangers such as steep ground and hidden cliffs. When you gain lower ground try to determine where you are and whether you can get to the coach by the planned departure time. Make for a house, farm or phone box and try to get a message through.

##### **Running Late**

If you think you may not get back in time, consider taking a bus or taxi. Always communicate with the Secretary and/or the coach driver, advising where you are and what you intend to do. Text messaging works when phone calls don't.

The bus will leave at or about the planned time, unless you have made contact to advise that your arrival is imminent. If you are likely to be significantly later than the advertised departure time it will be up to you make your own way home. It's therefore advisable to carry money, plastic card etc to pay for transport, meals, even overnight accommodation should it prove necessary.

If there has been no message received by the planned departure time the local rescue service or police may be notified. We ask on the outward coach journey "which walk are individuals proposing to undertake" - this is so that we can indicate the most likely search area to the authorities, thereby saving them from looking in the wrong direction.

##### **Injury**

If you or someone with you is injured and unable to walk, a responsible person should take charge of the situation. If telephone communication isn't possible, someone capable with a map & compass or GPS should be asked to go for help, whilst at least one person, preferably an identified first aider (see Membership Card) stays with the injured party. If you are on your own and need to attract attention use your whistle: 6 blasts, wait one minute then 6 more!

##### **Communication Procedure**

Ring or send a text to the emergency number on the walk sheet. If you do not get an acknowledgement or response within 30 minutes it's possible that your message didn't get through, in which case you should resort to the following:

Ring Enterprise Travel (the coach operators) on 01325 286924 and explain your situation (or leave a message explaining your predicament). Ask them to contact their coach driver, who should be able to communicate onwards to others on the outing.

**Everyone should make every effort to get back to the bus on time. This procedure is in place for emergencies only!**