

P600 MOUNTAINEERING RISK ASSESSMENT



P600 MOUNTAINEERING – RISK ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The 5-step model for Assessing Risk is provided by the [HSE](#). The five steps are as follows:

Identify hazards

Think about what may cause harm

Assess the risks

Decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how serious it could be.

Control the risks

Look at what you're already doing, and the controls you already have in place.

Consider what further controls can be put in place.

Record your findings

Record your significant findings, including: the hazards, who might be harmed and how, and what you are doing to control the risks

Review the controls

Review the controls you have put in place to make sure they are working.

Update your risk assessment record with any changes you make.

It's useful to think of 3 levels of risk assessment.

1. **Generic** – Inherent risk present in many environments.
2. **Site-specific** – Risk present in a specific environment.
3. **Dynamic** – Unique risks that cannot reasonably be foreseen, but which may be identified during the event and must be mitigated as they arise.

There are two key terms in risk assessment:

Hazard: Anything that has the potential to cause harm.

Risk: The likelihood that someone will be harmed by the hazard. Risk is assessed on a continuum from low to high.

The method chosen by **P600 Mountaineering** is to assess risks in terms of probability and impact, on a continuum of High – Medium – Low

		Probability		
		Low	Medium	High
Impact	Low	Low	Low	Medium
	Medium	Low	Medium	High
	High	Medium	High	High

- **Low** – no further action required.
- **Medium** – action required to reduce the risk. If residual risk level remains medium, then the activity may proceed with caution.
- **High** – If, after all precautions have been considered the residual risk level remains high, then the activity should not be undertaken.

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<i>Event/activity name</i>		<i>Event/activity date</i>	
<i>Assessor name</i>		<i>Assessor signature</i>	

Activity	Hazard	Who is at risk	Risk Factor H/M/L	Precautions to reduce risks	Residual Risk H/M/L
Hill walking & Mountaineering	Group members becoming split from the leader or group	Participants	M	<p>Briefing at the beginning of walk - participants will be requested to stay together as a group throughout the walk, in sight and within easy hailing distance of the walk leader and assistant leaders.</p> <p>Head counts will be made at regular intervals.</p> <p>Leaders are familiar with appropriate search techniques in the unlikely event of someone becoming separated from the group.</p> <p>A booking system will be used to control numbers of participants on the walk and collect contact details.</p> <p>Any participant wishing to leave the walk should inform the leadership team.</p>	L
	Navigation error leading to party becoming lost	Participants	M	<p>Leaders are suitably qualified or experienced to navigate the route that is planned, they are familiar with relocation techniques and are also familiar with the intended route and area in which the walk will take place.</p> <p>The preferred route is well known by the leadership team.</p> <p>On the day of the walk the route may be varied according to weather/ground conditions and other circumstances.</p>	L

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Inadequate levels of fitness leading to participant not being able to complete the walk safely	Participants	H	<p>The distance, amount of ascent and type of terrain will be explained in any publicity and joining instructions sent to those planning to take part and at pre-walk briefing so participants should be in no doubt, when they join the walk, as to the level of fitness required.</p> <p>Leaders will look out for signs of excessive fatigue.</p>	M
Intoxication or impaired by drugs	Participants	H	<p>Participants suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or recreational drugs will not be allowed to participate.</p> <p>If prescription or over the counter medications impair any participant's physical or mental capacity, in the view of the leader/s, they will not be allowed to participate for the safety of themselves, other participants and the general public.</p>	L
Insufficient food or water.	Participants	M	<p>In the joining instructions and briefing before the walk, participants will be recommended to bring a packed lunch (full day walk), snacks and sufficient water or other drinks.</p> <p>The leaders will carry emergency high energy snacks to supply to participants if required.</p>	L
Pre-existing medical conditions causing problems.	Participants	M	<p>Participants will be required to complete the medical declaration prior to commencement of the event, and will further be asked during the pre-walk briefing, to speak privately to the leaders about any medical conditions they have that may have a bearing on their ability to participate safely and the location in their packs of any medication or devices they might want leaders to find for them.</p> <p>All participants will be asked to carry an In Case of Emergency Card containing details of medical conditions and an emergency contact. This will be an added source of information if they experience an unexpected medical episode.</p>	L

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	Hypothermia	Participants	M	<p>Leaders are qualified or experienced in party management and first aid, and will undertake continuous risk assessment throughout the walks, taking appropriate actions to avoid participants becoming excessively cold.</p> <p>Leaders will carry amongst them an emergency mountain shelter and spare items of clothing.</p> <p>Participants will be reminded to bring sufficient warm liquid and attire for the walk and asked to inform leaders of any pre-existing conditions or medication.</p> <p>Anyone turning up for the walk who doesn't appear to be properly dressed or equipped will not be permitted to take part.</p> <p>If necessary, the route can be tailored on the day to reduce the length of the walk and levels of exertion.</p>	L
	Hyperthermia	Participants	M	<p>Leaders are qualified or experienced in party management and first aid, and will undertake continuous risk assessment throughout the walks, taking appropriate actions to avoid participants becoming excessively hot.</p> <p>Leaders will carry amongst them an emergency group shelter and some spare items of clothing.</p> <p>Participants will be reminded to bring sufficient liquid and head attire for the walk and asked to inform leaders of any pre-existing conditions or medication.</p> <p>Anyone turning up for the walk who doesn't appear to be properly dressed or equipped will not be permitted to take part.</p> <p>The leaders will ensure that the walk is appropriately paced and that rests are taken according to the weather conditions and make-up of the group.</p> <p>If necessary, the route can be tailored on the day to reduce the</p>	L

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				length of the walk and levels of exertion.	
	Road Traffic	Participants	M	<p>The route crosses and involves some walking on quiet roads, as well as starting and finishing in a quiet rural/village setting.</p> <p>Leaders are qualified or experienced in party management.</p> <p>The Highway Code will be followed and footways used when possible.</p> <p>Participants to be warned of any particular dangers and reminded to pay attention to traffic.</p>	L
	Ground hazards such as wet grass, mud, uneven terrain, bogs, loose rock, boulders etc.	Participants	H	<p>The route has been planned to mostly use established footpaths and tracks. However, some are rough, eroded and sometimes steep and ground prone to being marshy.</p> <p>There may be a modest amount of off-path terrain on access land. The foregoing hazards will be mentioned during the briefing.</p> <p>Leaders are qualified and/or experienced in leading groups over this type of terrain and have first aid training.</p> <p>Participants will be expected to wear suitable footwear to minimise the risk of trips and slips that could lead to injuries.</p> <p>Leaders are qualified or experienced to recognise areas of ground likely to be challenging and use party management skills to guide participants through or around them where necessary.</p>	M
	Falls from rocks and cliff edges	Participants	H	<p>Leaders are qualified or experienced in party management to mitigate the risk of slips, trips and falls in exposed terrain, including coaching participants in effective movement and the use of emergency rope techniques.</p>	L

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Rivers and streams	Participants	M	<p>The route may cross or pass close to small water courses, but unless there has been exceptionally heavy rain, these are not likely to cause any significant risk.</p> <p>In the event of there having been exceptionally heavy rain in the days before the walk, then the route of the walk will be changed if felt necessary or the walk cancelled.</p> <p>The leaders will conduct dynamic risk assessment on the walk, responding accordingly to conditions.</p>	L
Snow and ice	Participants	H	<p>In the unlikely event of anything more than a very light covering of snow, or of ice, then the walk would either be cancelled or changed to a safer route.</p> <p>Otherwise, the Leaders will undertake continuous risk assessment throughout the walks and are qualified or experienced in party management so they will guide the participants through any challenging areas or re-route, as necessary.</p>	L
Sun / Heat	Participants	H	<p>Walk leaders will check weather forecasts prior to the walk taking place.</p> <p>If necessary, leaders will remind participants to use sunscreen, appropriate clothing and carry appropriate amounts of liquid for consumption.</p>	L
Stiles	Participants	M	<p>It is not anticipated that these will pose any unusual risk to anyone who considers themselves fit enough to do the walk, but leaders will monitor.</p>	L
Biting or stinging insects	Participants	M	<p>Leaders are qualified or experienced first aiders and will undertake continuous risk assessment throughout the walks.</p> <p>Participants will be informed of the risk of Lyme disease and how to check for and remove ticks.</p>	L

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Domestic and farm animals	Participants	M	<p>There may be cattle, horses or sheep on land that the walk passes over.</p> <p>When crossing land containing livestock, the route will not deviate from public rights of way, mitigating the risk of encountering dangerous livestock.</p> <p>Leaders will use continuous risk assessment to decide whether any animals pose a danger to participants and re-route where necessary.</p> <p>Participants will not be permitted to bring dogs on events.</p> <p>In the case of private bookings, they may be permitted by prior agreement to bring their dog, if they agree to keep them on short, fixed leads throughout and to move them away from the main party and members of the public, if it appears possible, they may cause problems with farm animals.</p> <p>Owners will remain at all times responsible for keeping their animal under close control, as required under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953</p>	L
Wild animals & snakes	Participants	M	<p>Unlikely to be a problem in the area to be visited.</p> <p>The leaders are First Aid qualified and aware of emergency procedures</p>	L
High winds	Participants	H	<p>Walk leaders will check weather forecasts prior to the walk taking place.</p> <p>If exceptionally strong winds are forecast, then the walk will not go ahead.</p> <p>A lower-level walk might be considered if sufficiently sheltered.</p>	L
Heavy rain	Participants	H	<p>The walk will still go ahead in rain conditions unless it is exceptionally heavy.</p> <p>Participants will be recommended to bring weatherproof clothing</p>	L

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				<p>appropriate for the likely conditions.</p> <p>Leaders may adjust the route or timing to avoid the worst conditions.</p>	
Hill fog/low cloud	Participants	M	Leaders suitably qualified or experienced in navigation in these conditions and are suitably qualified or experienced in party management to ensure the group stays close together, and in search techniques in the unlikely event that someone goes missing.	L	
Lightening	Participants	M	<p>Leaders are qualified or experienced to take appropriate actions to minimise the risk of lightning strike to group members.</p> <p>If thunderstorms are forecast as highly likely, then the walk may be cancelled.</p> <p>A lower-level walk might be considered if sufficiently protected.</p>	L	
Equipment	Participants	M	<p>Participants will be provided with a kit list with mandatory and recommended items.</p> <p>Anyone turning up for the walk who doesn't appear to be properly dressed or equipped will not be permitted to take part.</p>	L	
Time Management	Participants	M	<p>Where there is a risk that planned or expected time deadlines will not be met, the leaders are suitably qualified and experienced to make sound decisions around variations to the plan.</p> <p>This might include foreshortening the route, changing the route, or electing to delay the end time, as appropriate.</p> <p>The leaders decision is final in these circumstances.</p>	L	
Delayed Return	Participants	M	<p>The leaders will provide a route plan and emergency plan to a third party with instructions of actions to take in the event of a delayed return from the event.</p> <p>This will include an expected return time, a time after which contact should be attempted with the walk leader, and a time after which</p>	L	

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				<p>emergency services should be contacted.</p> <p>Usually, the third party would attempt contact 1 hour after expected return time and contact emergency services 2 hours after expected return time if contact with the walk leader has failed.</p> <p>The walk leader will carry technology that allows remote tracking by nominated third parties, which will provide insight into progress throughout the day.</p>	
	Group Size	Participants	H	<p>Maximum ratio's will be observed as follows (Leader : Participant)</p> <p>Hill & Moorland Terrain (on defined paths) - 1:12</p> <p>Mountainous Terrain (on defined paths) - 1:8</p> <p>Mountainous Terrain (away from defined paths) - 1:6</p> <p>Mountainous Terrain (technical / scrambling) - 1:4</p> <p>Exact ratio's will be determined by the leader in the planning stage.</p>	L
	Nightfall	Participants	M	<p>The route and timing of the walks is planned to incorporate a good margin of safety with regards to daylight hours.</p> <p>Leaders are suitably experienced or qualified to navigate in the dark and carry torches and spare batteries or spare torches.</p> <p>It will be suggested to participants that they also carry a torch.</p>	L
Wellbeing	Illness or injury	Participants	M	<p>Leaders are qualified or experienced first aiders and will undertake continuous risk assessment throughout the walks.</p> <p>All leaders will be aware of the local Mountain Rescue Team details, in order to expediate the process of summoning medical support where an illness or injury cannot be remedied with first aid.</p>	L
Driving & Travel	Road Traffic Accident	Participants, Leaders & Public	H	<p>Drivers are qualified and experienced to drive the vehicle class being operated (e.g. D1 &/or MIDAS for a minibus).</p> <p>Drivers will not take part in walking activities, in order to mitigate</p>	L

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				<p>the risk of fatigue, and will use this time to rest and recover between journeys.</p> <p>All legal rest periods will be adhered to.</p> <p>All road traffic rules will be adhered to.</p> <p>All vehicles will be inspected before each journey to verify roadworthiness.</p>	
	Delays & Breakdowns	Participants, Leaders & Public	M	<p>All vehicles will be inspected before each journey to verify roadworthiness.</p> <p>All vehicles will be adequately covered with breakdown insurance.</p> <p>Where a breakdown occurs, the highway code will be followed with regards to vehicle and group management.</p>	L