



Guidance for MUAB walk leaders.

The **Walk Leader** should be a person with the ability to manage a diverse group of people, be experienced in walking in remote areas and in difficult terrain and be familiar with weather patterns, map reading and navigation. The Walk Leader should also be qualified to apply basic first aid.

In the case of some walks which are less demanding, eg urban walks or well-structured walks with good signage and easy access to assistance, the requirements for the walk leader are correspondingly less, and may be undertaken by a less experienced leader, if approved by the Walks Coordinator.

In MUAB we enjoy walking with any members who arrive on time on the day. This underlines the need to issue clear walk notes and provide for two groups. Walkers select according to their stamina and walking speed. Walk Leaders may need to adjust the groups for maximum numbers, for weather conditions and for similar abilities.

SAFETY

The Walk Leader is responsible for the safety of the group as a whole. Individuals within the group are responsible for their own actions and expected to comply with MUAB “Instructions for Walkers”.

SELECTING A WALK

- Selecting a walk will be done in association with the Walks Co-ordinator as part of the annual walks program. The walk should be structured to accommodate both a ‘long walk’ and a ‘short walk’.
- The Walk Leader should propose and lead walks within their own ability.
- A second leader should be designated for any alternative walk.
- Walks should include the opportunity to study the flora and fauna and constitute an adventure but not be dangerous or too challenging.

PLANNING THE WALK

- For safety you are expected to pre-walk or scope the whole of the planned route in conditions relevant to the day of the walk. This should be done with maps and an able companion, preferably the person nominated as the leader for any second group of ‘short walkers’ of different ability. To be covered by MUAB insurance, please notify the Walks Coordinator of pre-walks by email in advance.
- Be confident you could do the walk ‘on compass’, in very poor light and in bad weather.
- Consider your rescue plan. If you are not back, who will know? Can a mobile phone be tracked or relied on? Discuss with the Walks Coordinator if you need to carry a PLB.
- Make sure the leader of a second walk is briefed and is capable of leading that walk independently.
- Discuss with the Walks Coordinator about carrying of the defibrillator on the long or short walk.

- The Walk Leader should carry an appropriate First Aid kit (see website).
- Prepare walk notes with a sketch map so members will understand the location and route to be walked. Describe the walk grading, distance and stamina required as it would be for bad weather. Nominate walk leg times and intended locations or times of short breaks and lunch.
- Identify the START place exactly, the circle time, parking, toilet facilities, after-walk gathering and the expected FINISH time. Provide the mobile phone numbers of the Walk Leader(s).
- Clarity of walk difficulty is particularly important, to enable walkers to self-select for the walks they feel able to undertake.
- Prepare a plan for any necessary car shuffle if it is not a loop walk, with an estimate for numbers and locations of cars required.
- Consider offering a pick-up for those not driving, or a meeting point for a car-share arrangement. Be sure that any car-share arrangement will still provide sufficient cars for any intended car shuffle.
- Include in notes any proposed activity for amblers who may come to the starting venue just for some fellowship, easy walking and the coffee stop.
- The Walk Notes should be reviewed by the Walks Coordinator and then provided to the Secretary in Word.docx format at least two weeks in advance of the walk date.
- The Walk Leader will print and bring the “Members Attendance Sheet” and the “Visitors Attendance Sheet” for use on the day of the walk. These can be accessed from the website.

The Walk Leader, in discussion with the Walks Coordinator, is responsible for cancellation of a walk. Cancellation for fire risk is essential if there is a Total Fire Ban declared in the walk region. An MUAB walk will be cancelled by a message to all members, generally by email. Cancellation should be at least 24 hours ahead, or as soon as practical.

ON THE DAY

The Walk Leader should be at the start point 20 minutes early.

- As walkers arrive, they should be asked to add their names to the Members Attendance sheet and Visitors asked to sign the Visitors Attendance Sheet with their risk disclaimer.

The Walk Leader asks walkers to form a circle and briefs the walkers as follows.

- Describe the walk, the alternative walk, rest breaks by time or place, weather, challenges and who have the lead and whip positions. Explain to walkers of the turn-back plan should conditions require more caution on the walk.
- If there is both a long and a short walk, assess individuals for their equipment and ability to complete their chosen walk. The Leader has the right to refuse any walker to join a particular walk if they consider the walker may find the physical effort, slopes, slipperiness and agility required might expose them to significant risk of injury.
- Provide walkers with the Leaders’ phone contact and advise where phones may not work during the walk.
- Explain to all walkers the specified car shuffle plan when used. Brief all drivers separately.
- Check the walk attendance sheets and carry out a head count to reconcile numbers.
- Advise all walkers of the optional after-walk meeting location and time.

ON THE WALK

The Walk Leader is there to provide leadership and should keep some contact with all on the walk. All starting out on a walk expect the planning, preparation and leadership on the day will ensure the group's safety. Risk of an injury is greater if the proposed track has not been checked recently or is not followed on the day, or if the group loses sight of each other during the walk.

For each section of the walk the Walk Leader should;

- Assign a walk lead, whip and possibly a middleman.
- Share information and be risk averse. Be prepared to change plans if weather or track conditions are not as expected.
- Consider the requests and the opinions from any walker.
- Be aware of how each person is coping and assign a helping hand if necessary.

In a crisis please ensure your safety first and see that everyone is kept informed. Pool the resources and skills of the group. Wherever possible make sure that no one is left on their own and that at least two persons be assigned to seek help. This may dictate that on a difficult walk or where walking in bad weather, the minimum walk group should be 4 persons.

AFTER THE WALK

In the week following the walk,

- The attendance sheets are to be returned to the Secretary promptly. They may be scanned and emailed, or posted.
- A short "Walk Report" of 1/2 paragraphs suitable for the MUAB website should be submitted to the Webmaster (President), accompanied by a photograph. This may be written by the Walk Leader or delegated to one of the walkers on the day.
- The Walk Leader should seek feedback from some of the walkers and consider improvements that might be appropriate when repeating the walk, or when leading future walks.
- A discussion with the Walks Coordinator is encouraged to review issues that may have arisen.

Approved by the MUAB Committee, 02/06/2020