Walking Group Safety Guidelines for Leaders and Walkers

It is a good idea that everyone is aware of these guidelines and group members should have their own copy.

Everyone wants to be safe while out walking in a group but there needs to be a balance so that people don't feel too restricted by safety "rules". These safety guidelines have been developed to ensure that your walks are stress-free, enjoyable and safe.

Obviously there are different types of hazards to consider when walking in a built up urban area than there are when walking along tracks in the bush or hills however these guidelines should cover most situations.

1. Appoint a **Leader** and **"Tailender"** for the group. The Leader is the person primarily responsible for decisions regarding the route and the safety of the walkers. The tailender has an important role ensuring that slower walkers are safe.

2. Both the Leader and Tailender need to carry a whistle and a cell-phone (charged!). The whistle can be used to signal the group to stop. It is advisable that several mobile phones are carried amongst the group. The Leader and Tailender should have each other's number and other significant numbers.

3. At least one First Aid kit should be carried by a trained and confident First Aider, and the group be aware of whom this is. It may be a good idea that this be the Tailender. In the case of an emergency or serious injury call 111, and clearly state the situation and your location.

4. The First Aid kit should be regularly checked and maintained.

5. Walkers are responsible for carrying any medicine that they may require (such as inhalers for asthmatics, sweets for diabetics, Epi-pens or any medications etc.). The Leader and Tailender should be advised of any medical conditions and know what to do in case of an episode. They should also be told where walkers carry their medicine.
Personal medical or contact forms are also a good idea. These should be in the same or similar location for all walkers – the outside pocket of their day pack is a good option.

6. All walkers **must** tell the Leader or Tailender if they intend to leave the group for any reason.

7. If a walker is lost, walkers are to return along the route, calling out the person's name. Use a whistle if outside of an urban area. If the walker is not found, the Leader should contact:

    i. **Police:** Phone local police station or 111

    ii. **Local Park Ranger:** (if applicable) Phone 941 8666

8. Walkers are to walk in a buddy system – especially when walking away from built-up urban areas. Each person is responsible for the safe return of their partners.

9. At least TWO people are required if someone has to turn back or scout ahead. No person should be sent alone, unless always in sight of the group. The Leader **must** be informed.

10. All walkers should be able to see the walker in front of them and the walker behind them. If the route is difficult, stops will be necessary to prevent a walker from taking a wrong turn (such as at a junction or intersection).

11. The Leader is responsible for choosing safe routes which suit the fitness or ability levels of group members. The Leader and Tailender should be familiar with the route.

12. The Leader is responsible for counting numbers of the group at the beginning, the end and at any stops along the way to ensure that no walkers are lost.

13. Leaders are to act always in such a manner as to ensure safety to themselves and their walkers.

14. All walkers are responsible for carrying their own:

- wind-proof or rain coat;
- appropriate clothing and footwear;
- sunscreen and/or insect repellent;
- water;
- appropriate hat (such as a sunhat in summer or beanie in winter); and
- food.

15. When walking in an urban area, please obey all road and traffic rules (such as using crossing lights to cross, walking on the left where possible etc.)

16. Each group will make its own decision concerning admitting children or dogs on walks. However these additions need to be the responsibility of the adult with them.

HAPPY WALKING!