

Risk Assessment for Shambles

Revised May 2024 by Jo Revell Walking Adviser

Below are the main hazards and suggested control measures for the Shambles. Not all of them will apply to every section or every walk. Shambles are usually walks in Shropshire or nearby and undertaken by adult vounteers, occasionally their non-Guiding friends and occasionally young people usually 14 -18 years old. If young people attend, supervision and reminders will need to be incorporated into the control measures.

Hazards what could cause harm or damage?	Who or what is at risk of being affected and how?	What are you already doing? How have you reduced the risk already?	Likelihood of risk occurring L/M/H	Severity of risk L/M/H	What else needs to be done to reduce the risk to an acceptable level?
Hot weather	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participants to wear sunhat and sunscreen. • All participants to carry water. • Frequent short rests in shade and encouragement to drink. 	L	M	In case of heat wave ie 30°C confer with walkers and consider postponing the walk until cooler.
Cold, wet or windy weather.	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participants to wear layers of clothing with waterproof windproofs over the top. • All participants to have hats and gloves with them. 	M	M	<p>Leaders to carry spare clothing including hats, mitts and scarves. Leader to carry hot drinks.</p> <p>If high winds are forecast review route and consider whether the risk from falling trees is acceptable or not, including risk to drivers trying to reach start of route.</p> <p>If icy conditions forecast consider postponement</p>

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Ill fitting footwear	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants to wear comfortable walking boots. • Check after 30 minutes for any signs of rubbing and treat potential potential blisters before they form. 	L	L	Leaders to carry first aid kit to include blister plasters.
Exertion	Participants with insufficient fitness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow frequent, short rest breaks. • Ensure participants have small high energy snacks and drink small amounts frequently. 	L	L	Leaders to carry high energy snacks. Walking poles.
Water such as rivers, streams, canals and flooded areas.	Anyone who falls in.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid riverside routes during high river levels. • When route planning take into account the terrain and recent rainfall. Plan alternative routes to avoid flooded areas. 	M	L (H in winter)	Dynamic risk assessment during walk and amend route if floods or excessively boggy areas are encountered.
Insect bites and stings	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full length trousers or jogging bottoms (not jeans) advised. • Insect repellent recommended especially in the summer months. • Tick remover to be carried in 	M	L	

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Animals eg dogs, cattle and horses.	All	<p>leaders first aid kit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not to touch animals without the owners permission. • If walking through a field of cows with calves is unavoidable, proceed quietly and avoid getting between cows and calves. Stay close together. • Walkers are not encouraged to bring dogs as many Shambles are on routes with lots of stiles and sheep. • Keep dogs on a lead and well away from livestock. If cattle get dangerously close and are agitated let the dog off the lead. 	M	M	Leaders with confidence in dealing with livestock to decide how best to cross fields containing horses or cattle.

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Traffic	All when walking on or crossing roads.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shambles are planned to minimise walking on roads. • Walk on the pavement. • If no pavement walk in single file facing oncoming traffic. • When crossing roads, stop, look and listen. • Wait for a long enough gap in the traffic for the group to cross together, quickly but without running. 	M	M	<p>If route has right hand bend on road with no pavement cross and walk on the opposite side where you can see traffic and drivers can see you.</p> <p>If group contains more than 20 walkers and there is no pavement walk on the left with a leader wearing high visibility tabard at front and rear. Allocate a leader to the rear of the group to ensure that there are no stragglers.</p>
Slips, trips and falls	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point out hazards to participants such as muddy areas, slippery stiles, tree roots, holes and rocks and encourage them not to rush, to watch where they are putting their feet and to help each other as needed. 	M	M	Walking poles may help on steep terrain.

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Trains	All when crossing railways at level crossings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentrate – it's easy to get distracted, especially by phones, music and conversation. • Stop, look and listen. Follow signs and instructions. • Check both ways before crossing – if there is a train coming, don't cross. • Understand the warnings (lights, barriers, alarms). • Cross quickly, keeping children close and dogs on a lead. • One leader at head of party to be stationed no closer than 2m from track and check both ways for oncoming trains before each person crosses. • If a train passes wait until visibility is clear in both directions to ensure that there isn't a train coming the other way. 	L	H	Allocate an leader to the rear of the group to ensure that there are no stragglers.

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Route beyond the capabilities of the group	All but particularly less experienced or less fit walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several qualified and /or experienced walk leaders attend each Shamble and plan the routes. This includes measuring the distance to be walked and the gradients and checking on weather forecasts. • Escape routes are also considered in case it is necessary to shorten or abandon the route for any reason. • Planned routes are shared with all participants so they can judge for themselves whether they wish to come. • Routes are planned to be completed well within the day light hours available and, where possible, to allow participants to return home during day light. 	M	M	Dynamic risk assessment during the course of the walk and adjusting the route as necessary. Leaders confer on conditions underfoot, weather, navigational accuracy and group management.

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Wobbly Stiles	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First person to cross stile warns others if it is slippery or wobbly. • As necessary walkers assist each other to cross stiles safely eg by holding the stile to stop it wobbling, providing additional support, holding walking poles. etc 	H	M	