

IN AN EMERGENCY

Most people enjoy a safe visit to the countryside of the National Park, especially when following the advice in this leaflet. This section will help you to know what to do if the worst does happen.

Do not try to move someone who may be badly injured or suffering from exposure* (hypothermia). Keep them warm and dry and try to summon help. If you have to fetch help, leave someone with the casualty.

To contact the **Emergency Services**, dial 999 (112 from mobile phones BUT remember that mobiles do not work everywhere in the countryside) and ask for POLICE. They will call out trained rescue teams. You will need to tell them about the injury and when it happened, and where the casualty is (preferably a map reference). You should stay by the telephone until the rescue team or police arrive, so that you can keep in touch with the rescue coordinators.

If you cannot get to a phone use the **international distress signal** - 6 blasts on a whistle, shouts or flashes of a torch. Repeat as necessary after a minute's pause. 3 back is the reply.

***Exposure:** If you get caught out on the hills in bad weather, watch for signs of exposure. These include; fatigue, shivering, stumbling, slurred speech and erratic behaviour.

WHEREVER YOU GO...

- **Tell someone where you're going:** Make sure that somebody knows where you are going and what time you expect to be back. Tell them when you get back safely, or if you are delayed or change your plans.
- **Watch the weather:** check the forecast before you go, but remember that conditions can change quickly – it's safest to always have warm clothes, waterproofs & a hat with you.
- **Take the right equipment:** Make sure you are wearing suitable clothes and shoes for the type of trip you are taking. Groups should always have a group shelter with them.

If you are in a group:

- **Keep together,** never abandon anyone because they can't keep up, go at the pace of the slowest person. Make sure everyone knows where you are heading, and the basic route.
- **Leaders should have first-aid and navigation skills.** You must be sure that the activity is suitable for all members of the group before you set out.

...HAVE FUN!

Want more Information?

- Log onto www.breconbeacons.org
- Visit a National Park Information Centre
- Phone 01874 623366
(National Park Visitor Centre)

BE SAFE

Safety Advice for ALL Walkers in the Brecon Beacons National Park



Whether you are strolling, walking or hiking this leaflet will help you have a safe and enjoyable visit

AROUND WATER

There are wonderful rivers, waterfalls and waterside places to explore in the National Park, but they can be dangerous as well as beautiful. Take note of the following points and enjoy your visit safely.

- **Supervise children at all times** - even shallow water can be dangerous.
- **Read any signs you see** – they may be telling you about specific hazards.
- **Wading across rivers can be extremely dangerous.** Rivers are often fast flowing and deeper than they look. The flow and depth of water can vary widely from day to day,
- **River water is always cold**, even in hot weather, and this can make swimming dangerous. Even strong swimmers can get into difficulties because of the effects of very cold water.
- **Paths can be uneven and slippery, especially around the waterfalls.** Wear walking boots or trail shoes to explore the Waterfalls area of the National Park. Trainers, mules and sandals do not give enough grip on slippery rocks.
- **Look out for steep drops and keep away from the edge of banks and ledges.** There are sudden cliff edges around the waterfalls. River banks can be unstable.
- **Do not enter cave or mine entrances.** They may contain hidden hazards.
- **As with any trip make sure somebody knows where you are going and when you will be back.**

ON THE HILLS

The National Park has some of the most beautiful mountain scenery in the country. Many hills in the National Park exceed 450m (1500ft) with some almost 900m (3000ft). **Walking and climbing are rewarding experiences but care is needed even in the foothills. Take note of the following points to make sure you enjoy your visit safely.**

Plan your route:

- **Use a good map** such as Ordnance Survey (available from all National Park Information Centres) preferably 1:25,000 scale.
- **Many guide books are available** and can provide a route or help you plan your own.
- **Choose a route that is suited to your ability.** Don't plan a challenging climb if you don't feel confident.
- **Make a route card** that details each section of your route with grid references, distances etc.
- As a rough guide, **allow for a speed of 4 km/hr (2 ½ miles/hr)**, plus an additional half hour for every 300m (1000 ft) climbed – but remember times will vary depending on the conditions and your particular walking speed.
- **Allow plenty of time to complete your route** before nightfall and have a planned alternative 'escape' route in case of emergency.

Take the right equipment:

- **Clothing:** warm, windproof layers and good waterproofs. A warm hat and gloves in cold weather, a hat with brim in the sun.
- **Footwear:** Walking boots are essential; trainers are not suitable for hill walking.
- **Map, compass** (make sure you know how to use them) and **route card**.
- **First aid kit, drink** (plenty of water, especially in summer and a hot flask in winter), **'emergency' food** (chocolate or sweets for an energy boost).
- Other basic equipment includes: **watch, pencil and paper, torch** (with spare bulb and battery), **coins** for telephones (mobile phone coverage cannot be relied upon), **survival bag, spare clothes**.

Watch the weather:

- **Conditions can change rapidly** and the general forecast is not always reliable – plan for the worst. There is a danger of exposure all year round.
- **It will get colder the higher you go** and hilltops are likely to be chilly even in summer. Easter is more like winter than summer in the hills.
- **Mist, wind or rain can disorientate you** and make you lose your way.
- **Apply sunscreen** even on overcast days to avoid the risk of burning.
- In **snow and ice** you need special equipment and skills to go out on the hills; do not attempt it without them.