



Final Check List

- Have you checked the weather forecast?
- Do you have clothing for wet and windy weather?
- Do you have enough food and drink?
- Do you have a map and compass?
- Have you left details of your walk with somebody?

When going walking, use the section below to leave details with a responsible person. *Don't forget to get in touch later to let them know that you're OK, otherwise Mountain Rescue could be called out unnecessarily.*

Our Walk Plan

Name: _____

Address: _____

Day / date of walk: _____

Where do you intend to walk today? (give general area and name points along your route)

Number of people in group: _____

Car registration: _____

Mobile phone number: _____

Where do you intend to stay tonight? _____

At which time should I contact the Emergency Services if I do not hear from you?

To alert the Emergency Services dial 999 or 112 and ask for Mountain Rescue.

Follow the Country Code

Most of the Irish countryside (including the hills) is privately owned. Fortunately, the majority of landowners do not object to walkers crossing their property, as long as they respect the Country Code.

All walkers should follow these simple guidelines:



1. *Respect the people who live and work in the countryside.*
2. *Respect private property, farmland and all rural areas.*
3. *Park carefully; avoid blocking farm gateways or narrow roads.*
4. *Use approved walking routes where they exist.*
5. *Where possible ask permission before crossing farmland.*
6. *Dogs should be kept under close control and should not be brought onto hills or farmland without the landowner's permission.*
7. *Avoid damage to fences, hedges and walls; use gates and stiles when crossing.*
8. *Leave all gates as you find them (open or closed).*
9. *Do not interfere with machinery, crops or animals.*
10. *Protect wildlife, water sources, plants and trees.*
11. *Walk on the centre of tracks, don't trample vegetation on the edges.*
12. *Take your litter home, even biodegradable items can take years to disappear.*
13. *Guard against all risk of fire and avoid making unnecessary noise.*
14. *Always keep children closely supervised during a walk.*

Note: The routes for Waymarked Ways have been agreed with landowners, but are not 'rights of way'. Similarly, the inclusion of a route in a guidebook, or track on a map, does not mean that it is a 'right of way'.

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For further information contact:

Mountaineering Council of Ireland
www.mountaineering.ie
mci@eircom.net
T. +353 1 4507376

National Waymarked Ways Advisory Committee (ROI)
www.walkireland.ie
info@irishsportsCouncil.ie
T. +353 1 2407727

Countryside Access and Activities Network (NI)
www.countrysiderecreation.com
info@countrysiderecreation.com
T. +44 28 90383848



Walk safely...



...in the Irish hills and countryside.

Ireland has a wonderful variety of scenery and walking is one of the best ways to appreciate it. It's also a great way to unwind, it's healthy and it brings you close to nature. There is an element of risk inherent in countryside walking, but if you understand the risks and take some simple precautions you're unlikely to have any problems.

There are no marked footpaths high on the Irish mountains. However there is a network of waymarked routes (over 3300km) winding through forests and quiet mountain valleys, along rugged coastline, canal and river banks, right across Ireland. Unless you're experienced at reading maps it is safer to stay on these marked routes.

Be prepared for Ireland's changeable weather. It's possible to experience sunshine, strong winds and heavy rain all in one afternoon. If you plan to walk in the hills remember that the temperature will be lower there, the winds stronger and you are more likely to get mist and rain.

If you have any doubt in relation to your health and fitness please consult your medical adviser before taking on exercise which you might find strenuous.

Step 1: Choose Carefully

- Do you want an energetic hillwalk or a more leisurely lowland stroll?
- For how long do you want to walk?
- Choose a route that suits everybody in your group
- Consider joining a guided walk
- Ask locally for advice on where to walk
- Is there a Waymarked Way or other marked trail nearby?
- Can you get a book or map guide showing walking routes in the area?
- Do you have a detailed map of the area? (1:50,000 or more detailed).



If you're not confident about reading a map and using a compass to navigate, stick to low-level ground and marked trails.

Step 2: Planning Is Key To Safety

- Make sure to check the weather forecast and plan accordingly
- Allow plenty of time – at least one hour for every 4km
- Add extra time for any uphill sections, rests, lunch and taking photos
- Know what time it gets dark. Plan to finish your walk well before sunset
- For seashore walks check the times of the tide to ensure that you won't be cut off by rising water
- It is safer not to go walking alone
- Leave details of your plans with somebody and don't forget to contact that person later to say that you have returned safely.



You can get an up-to-date weather forecast for your area by calling:

Republic of Ireland

South West: 1550 123850

East & South East: 1550 123851

West: 1550 123852

North West: 1550 123853

Calls cost 74 cent per minute (March 2003)

Northern Ireland

090 68 232 797

Calls cost 60p per minute (March 2003)

Step 3: Clothing And Equipment

- Always bring a waterproof jacket
- Wear walking boots or shoes suitable for use on rough ground
- Bring plenty of food and liquids
- While a mobile phone may be useful in an emergency, it should not be relied on as a safety aid. Coverage is often poor in the hills and countryside.
- Additional items needed for walking in the hills:
 - Map and compass, with the ability to use them
 - Warm clothing, plus a hat and gloves are essential all year round
 - Waterproof overtrousers, a torch, whistle, personal first aid kit, survival bag and high energy food are also important.



The most common injury on the Irish hills is to the ankle or lower leg, usually resulting from a simple slip or fall. This is less likely to happen if you wear comfortable walking boots with good ankle support and a rugged sole.

Step 4: During The Walk

- Keep your map to hand and use it to keep track of where you are
- If in a group, stay together and watch out for each other
- Avoid steep ground, cliffs and unnecessary hazards such as crossing rivers
- Be aware of traffic, especially if walking on busy roads
- Remember, you are responsible for your own safety
- Don't rush, take breaks and most importantly enjoy yourself!



Watch for changes in the weather, if it deteriorates be prepared to alter the route or turn back

Step 5: If Something Goes Wrong

- If you think you're lost, look at what's around you, think about where you have walked, then study the map and try to work out your location.
- If you need help in an emergency, phone 999 or 112 and ask for Mountain Rescue. Mountain Rescue is a voluntary service and should only be contacted in a genuine emergency.
- If you need to send people to phone for help, make sure they can find their way and have written details of the group's location and the nature of any injuries.
- Treat any injuries to the best of your ability, keep the casualty warm and as comfortable as possible.
- Ensure the other members of the group are also safe and comfortable as it may take a number of hours for help to arrive.



Look after yourself, and most importantly enjoy walking in Ireland!