

Safety Guidelines

-Extended Walking field trip >1.5km

Known Potential Risks

- Injuries related to motor vehicle incidents if driving to/from a walking tour area.
- Injuries related to vehicle-pedestrian incidents.
- Becoming lost or separated from the group or the group becoming split up.
- Sub-optimal weather or weather changes creating adverse conditions students not properly dressed for.
- Injuries related to slips, trips, and falls at the site and/or en-route to/from it.
- Foot, knee or other leg injuries (e.g., blisters, sprains, strains).
- Acute or overuse injuries/conditions.
- Allergic reactions to natural substances in the environment (e.g., bee or wasp stings).
- Injuries related to interactions with animals and plants in the environment.
- Other risks normally associated with the activity and environment.

Common Risk Mitigation Strategies

Teacher/Leader Readiness

- The teacher/leader must be competent to organize the walking activity; to demonstrate, instruct and supervise it, and to effect rescue and emergency procedures as necessary.
- The teacher/leader must be familiar with the area and/or route.
- Assistant teachers/leaders should have adequate knowledge, skill, fitness and related experience to support the group.

- At least one supervisor should have first aid training or a first aid trained person should be available at the destination, the level dependent upon the time/distance from professional first responders (refer to *First Aid in General Considerations for Off-site Activities*).

Route

- Plan a safe, appropriate route (e.g., avoiding heavy traffic, dense crowds of people).
- Obey all traffic rules and regulations and signage.
- Cross at intersections (i.e., avoid jaywalking) and use crosswalks and pedestrian-activated signals where they are available.
- For a lengthy walk on a new route, consider the value of a pre-walk to allow for a safety check, communications device check, and time estimates.
- Where required to walk where there is no sidewalk, 'leg on the left' (i.e., walk facing oncoming traffic).

Equipment

- Supervisors of large groups in crowded environments (especially public) should be easily identifiable (e.g., bright clothing or hats, reflective vests).
- For large groups, consider an auditory signal (e.g., whistle) to get student attention.
- The weather forecast, duration of the walk and planned activities will determine what, if any, extra clothing and equipment is needed. Generally, students should carry their own daypacks (e.g., water bottles, snacks, extra clothing and/or other items).
- An appropriate first aid kit should be carried or accessible within five (5) minutes;
- A charged cell phone or other appropriate telecommunications device should be carried. If unsure of cell coverage, check during a pre-walk/drive or by asking venue staff.

Instruction

- Age/grade and situation-appropriate road safety instruction must be provided and modelled if crossing roadways (e.g., with younger groups, can instruct in 4Ps: Peer around to see where traffic is coming from; Point across the road to indicate to drivers you want to cross; Pause until all vehicles are stopped; Proceed with arm extended and continuing to scan for moving vehicles).
- Instruct students in what to do if they get lost/separated from the group (e.g., stay put, find a venue staff, flag down a municipal bus).

Supervision

Ensure students are appropriately supervised (considering age, maturity and context). In addition to the guidelines in *Supervision* in the *General Considerations*, apply the following as appropriate:

- Use of a buddy system is recommended.
- Larger groups of students (based on context; e.g., location, traffic, public) should be kept between a lead (supervisor at front) and sweep (supervisor at rear).
- Split large groups into walking units with a supervisor/unit; each unit functioning as a group (e.g., crossing intersections together, staying together in museum).
- The lead and sweep should be in audible (and ideally, visual) range of each other.
- If the group gets too spread out, adjust the pace or urge dawdlers on.

The suggested minimum supervisor to student ratios are:

Student Grade	Number of Supervisors to Students
K – 3	1:6 / 2:12
4 – 7	1:10 / 2:20
8 – 12	1:15 / 2:30

Where a 2:30 ratio is provided, the intent is to suggest that two supervisors can likely handle a full class of students. It is accepted that, in some cases, this might mean a few more than 30 students;

class sizes vary. Adjust supervision ratio if/as necessary due to the presence of any special considerations.

Notes

1. If, when reviewing the guidelines above, terms and concepts presented are unfamiliar, this is a strong indicator that additional personal leadership preparation (e.g., a training course, reading) or contracting a qualified service provider is advisable.
2. This document is not intended as an instructional guide. The teacher will need to use other references to learn how to teach students the skills (e.g., how to brake when inline skating, how to do a diagonal stride when cross-country skiing).