

Short Walk- Safety Guidelines

Known Potential Risks

- Injuries related to vehicle-pedestrian incidents;
- Becoming lost or separated from the group or the group becoming split up;
- Injuries related to slips, trips, and falls at the site or en-route to/from it;
- Sub-optimal weather or significant weather changes creating adverse conditions students not properly dressed for;
- Allergic reactions to natural substances (e.g., bee or wasp stings);
- Injuries related to interactions with animals and plants in the environment; and
- 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.

Route

- Plan a safe, appropriate route (e.g., avoiding heavy traffic, dense crowds of people).
- Distance Approx 1.5 km
- Cross at intersections (i.e., avoid jaywalking) and use crosswalks and pedestrian-activated signals where they are available.
- Where required to walk where there is no sidewalk, 'leg on the left' (i.e., walk facing oncoming traffic).

Equipment

- A charged cell phone or other appropriate telecommunications device should be carried to use to contact the school or EMS if/as needed.

Instruction

- Obey all traffic rules and regulations and trail signs.
- Age/grade and situation-appropriate road safety instruction must be provided and/or 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).

Supervision

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

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

The suggested minimum supervisor to student ratios for short off-site walks are:

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

Where a 1:30 ratio is provided, the intent is to suggest that one supervisor can likely handle a full class of students if the route and destination are very low risk and the group is well-managed. 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).