



GUIDANCE - DOGS ON WALKS

After consideration of relevant health and safety and environmental law, the National Executive Committee has agreed the following guidelines for dogs on walks:

1. Only LDWA members are allowed to bring dogs on walks, guests may not bring dogs except assistance dogs.
2. The decision to allow dogs on walks rests with the walk leader or walk organiser.
3. If dogs are excluded from a walk then assistance dogs must be allowed unless dogs are prohibited on permissive paths / wildlife protection areas / there are overriding health and safety issues (see Note 1 below).
4. If dogs are not allowed this will be made clear in all published information. We recommend '*No dogs allowed*' where all dogs are excluded, and '*Assistance dogs only*' where it is the leader's preference to exclude dogs.
5. If dogs are allowed, owners must provide verbal confirmation that their dog is covered by Pet Owners' Liability Insurance (see Note 2 below). If there is no liability insurance then the dog will be excluded.
6. To facilitate checking, local groups will ask members with dogs to confirm they have liability insurance annually, at the time of the AGM, and the dog's name will then be included in the register. It is the responsibility of the owner to ensure that insurance is maintained for the full year, or to notify the local group.
7. The walk leader will seek confirmation of liability insurance from any member who attends with a dog that is not on the register. The dog should then be marked on the register.
8. The register of attendance for each walk must record which dogs were on the walk.
9. It is the responsibility of the dog owner to make sure the dog is kept under close control and on a lead if required (see Note 3 below). Walk leaders may remind dog owners of their responsibilities if necessary.
10. Incidents caused by dogs are NOT covered by LDWA insurance.

Dogs on Walks Advice Notes

Note 1: Reasons to exclude all dogs include: access rights prohibiting dogs, sensitive wildlife areas e.g. nesting birds on moorland, inappropriate terrain e.g. scrambling / ladders. This is not an exhaustive list. Under the Equality Act (2010) it is against the law for the LDWA to treat members less favourably because they have a guide or assistance dog with them. Local groups must make reasonable adjustments to social walks where possible to allow the member to attend.

Note 2: Pet Owner's Liability insurance can be obtained in a variety of ways: It may be included in your house / contents insurance, or could be added for a small premium. It may be included in dog health insurance schemes. It can be obtained by joining the Dogs Trust.

It is the dog owner's responsibility to ensure that the insurance is suitable to cover all third party liabilities relating to their dog.

Note 3: Dogs should be kept under close control at all times and on a short lead near livestock or sensitive wildlife, or where official regulations require it. Owners should clean up after their dog.

Acknowledgements. Many thanks to **Anne Brown**, Dorset LDWA for volunteering to pull together this revised guidance, approved by the National Executive Committee.

Who are the LDWA?

The LDWA is an Association of people with the common interest of walking long distances mainly in rural, urban, mountainous or moorland areas. It is a Company limited by Guarantee. The Local Group Committees and the National Executive Committee (NEC) are all volunteers.

<https://ldwa.org.uk/>

Contact: Environment Officer at environment@ldwa.org.uk

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