

Outdoor Activity Hazard and Risk Assessment

For Guided Walks and Field Trips



The Cornwall Geologist provides outdoor activities such as guided walks and field trips to members of the public and educational groups. Whilst the coast and countryside are a beautiful places, there are potential hazards to people and the environment. To minimise risks, each individual must take responsibility for safety, awareness of their surroundings, and consciously thinking how their actions may impact themselves or others.

This document provides a hazard and risk assessment for outdoor activities being undertaken by Cornwall Geologist. Whilst not referring to a specific location, it considers risks in a variety of environments activities would take place in a rural, coast and countryside setting. The assessment of risk is conducted using a severity versus likelihood scoring system, defined in Section 2. A location-specific risk assessment will also be carried out ahead of an organised activity, and will be made available to participants taking part.

All participants must familiarise themselves with the itinerary and hazard and risk assessment in advance of an activity, so they know what to expect. All activities will begin with a verbal safety briefing by the activity leader covering the hazard and risk assessment, along with any extra precautions necessary to control risks.

Each individual will be informed of their responsibilities: a) Be aware of potential hazards and use common sense to protect yourself, others, and the environment, and b) Follow instructions from the activity leader and inform them immediately if you feel unwell or encounter any safety concerns. All participants must sign a digital or physical acknowledgment to confirm they have read and agree to their responsibilities before an activity.

This document will be reviewed and updated annually. It conforms with the Cornwall Geologist [Health and Safety Policy](#), [Environmental Policy](#), and [Code of Conduct](#).

1. Hazard and Risk Assessment

Hazard	Hazard Description	Control measures	Likelihood score (A)	Severity score (B)	Risk score (C = A x B)	Additional actions
1.1 Physical hazards						
a. Extreme weather	Storms, rain, sleet / snow, winds, fog, electrical storms	<p>Activity to be conducted in line with safe working practice defined by the prevailing weather conditions. Forecasts to be monitored before an activity and assessment made if it could go ahead.</p> <p>In the event of an amber or more severe weather warning from the Met Office, or personal judgment based on the experience of the activity leader, an activity will be cancelled. If an activity can go ahead, the activity leader will advise participants on how best to prepare and what to wear to minimise any risk posed by the weather. Suitable clothing (several layers, hat, gloves, waterproofs), and footwear (semi-waterproof walking boots or wellies) are required.</p> <p>Activity routes and itineraries may be modified before or during the activity to accommodate any adverse weather conditions.</p>	2	2	4	None required.
b. High temperatures	UV exposure, heat exhaustion, sun burn, heat stroke	<p>Activity to be conducted in line with safe working practice defined by the prevailing weather conditions. Forecasts to be monitored before an activity and assessment made if it could go ahead.</p>	2	2	4	None required.

		<p>In the event of an amber or more severe weather warning or Heat-health Alerts from the Met Office, or personal judgment based on the experience of the activity leader, an activity will be cancelled. If an activity can go ahead, the activity leader will advise participants on how best to prepare. Appropriate clothing (light but covers skin) to best suit the conditions. Advised to carry a hat, sunscreen, and plenty of fluids.</p> <p>Activity routes and itineraries may be modified before or during the activity to accommodate any adverse weather conditions.</p>				
c. Low temperatures	Hypothermia, frostbite	<p>Activity to be conducted in line with safe working practice defined by the prevailing weather conditions. Forecasts to be monitored before an activity and assessment made if it could go ahead.</p> <p>In the event of an amber or more severe weather warning from the Met Office, or personal judgment based on the experience of the activity leader, an activity will be cancelled. If an activity can go ahead, the activity leader will advise participants on how best to prepare. Suitable field clothing (warm, waterproof, carry spare dry layers) and footwear required.</p> <p>Activity routes and itineraries may be modified before or during the activity to accommodate any adverse weather conditions.</p>	2	2	4	None required.

<p>d. Tides</p>	<p>Being cut off by the tide, losing access to locations or evacuation routes due to tides</p>	<p>Tide times to be checked by activity leader in advance of an activity and inform the party. Activity leader to research access and cut off points on activity that would be affected by the tide. An activity will not access areas that are liable to being cut off by the tide during the times of the visit and influenced by any prevailing weather conditions.</p> <p>Activity routes and itineraries may be modified before or during the activity to accommodate any adverse sea conditions.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>None required.</p>
<p>e. Sea conditions</p>	<p>Big swell / waves, currents, riptides, abnormal waves</p>	<p>Activity to be conducted in line with safe working practice defined by the prevailing sea conditions. Forecasts to be monitored before an activity and assessment made if an activity could go ahead.</p> <p>If an activity can go ahead, the activity leader will advise participants on how best to prepare. Advise participants not to go near water and monitor their behaviour throughout the day and correct if necessary.</p> <p>Activity routes and itineraries may be modified before or during the activity to accommodate any adverse sea conditions.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>None required.</p>
<p>f. Slips, trips, and falls</p>	<p>Loose terrain, soft ground, uneven surfaces, slippery surfaces, slopes / hills</p>	<p>Activity leader to research access and ground conditions across the area being visited on activity and select appropriate routes to minimise risk and avoid working around dangerous terrain. Participants will be advised on the type of terrain they will experience before an activity, and</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>None required.</p>

		throughout an activity. They will only be advised to cross ground if it is safe to do so. Participants advised to wear suitable footwear. Participants will be encouraged to take time crossing terrain and not to push themselves beyond what they are comfortable doing, and not taking unnecessary risks.				
g. Working from height	Cliffs, escarpments, excavations	Activity leader to research areas being visited to note any hidden drops and designate areas that cannot be accessed. Participants must not approach the top of any features with a height > 2 m, staying more than 2 m back from the edge. Participants must not climb >1 m from ground level.	1	5	5	None required.
h. Rock fall	Rocks falling from cliffs, landslides	Activity leader to assess the safety of cliff faces for rock fall and landslide potential before an activity takes place. An assessment can be made by the activity leader of the rock fall / landslide potential and if deemed to be safe, can approach only if wearing head protection. If hard hats are not available participants must not approach the bottom of any features (e.g., cliffs, escarpments) with a height > 2 m, staying more than 5 m back from the base.	1	5	5	None required.
i. Transport	Transport to and from activities, walking along or near roads and other transport routes	Participants are expected to make their own way to the start of an activity and home again afterwards. The official start and end of an activity is at a specified location. The activity leader is not responsible for any participants en route to and from an activity.	4	1	4	None required.

		<p>The activity leader has appropriate driving licence, training, and car insurance. Activity leader to research the route before travel. It is recommended that participants use public transport where possible.</p> <p>Activity leader to research if an activity will involve walking near or on roads or any other transport routes (e.g., train lines) before an activity takes place. They will be avoided if possible.</p> <p>If having to walk along a road, this will be done in single file walking towards oncoming traffic. At a minimum, the person at the front and back of the line will wear a hi-vis waistcoat and carry a torch for low light scenarios. When crossing roads suitable crossing points will be chosen, crossing in pairs rather than a whole group. Train lines will only be crossed at official crossing points.</p>				
<p>j. Mines, quarries, excavations</p>	<p>Hidden mine shafts or other big drops, collapse, falling rocks, old machinery, industrial buildings</p>	<p>Activity leader to research the existence and safety of any old industrial activity in the area being visited before an activity takes place.</p> <p>Participants must not enter any old mine workings, including industrial buildings, mine shafts and adits / tunnels. Participants must stick to designated paths around old mine workings.</p> <p>Participants must stay away from quarry faces and other excavations following the same guidance with working from height (1g) and under escarpments (1h). An</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>None required.</p>

		<p>assessment can be made by the activity leader of the rock fall / landslide potential and if deemed to be safe can approach only if wearing head protection.</p> <p>Participants must not remove or damage any old mining equipment from where they are found.</p>				
k. Fire	Wildfire in areas of gorse and heather	<p>To prepare for the unlikely event of a fire taking place the activity leader will assess the area being visited to look for areas of potential for wildfires to start. From this an evaluation will be made on what areas can and cannot be visited, safe zones, and safe means of evacuation throughout an activity.</p> <p>Participants are not permitted to start fires or barbeques during an activity. Any smokers will be asked to ensure cigarettes are completely extinguished using water and take cigarette butts home with them.</p>	1	5	5	None required.
I. Heavy lifting	E.g., picking up rocks, not lifting in the correct body position, over-reaching causing physical injury.	<p>Participants will be asked to refrain from picking anything up that is more than fist-sized and reminded to only lift things they are capable of doing so. If lifting heavy objects, ensure to keep the load close to the body, avoid twisting the back and bend with the knees. Participants must wear covered shoes (no open toe shoes). Steel toe-capped shoes are not required unless a third-party risk assessment states otherwise.</p>	1	3	3	None required.
m. Sampling	Taking rock or mineral samples, using a hammer	<p>Participants are not allowed to take rock or mineral samples from any of the sites being visited. Participants are not allowed to use</p>	1	4	4	None required.

		geological hammers on any activity. They will be instructed on this during the safety briefing. If the activity leader uses a hammer during an activity for demonstration purposes safety eyewear and gloves must be worn at all times and ensure nobody is within a 2 m radius of where hammering takes place.				
1.2 Biological hazards						
a. Flora and fauna	Stinging plants, e.g., nettles, insect stings / bites, adder bites, marine life, wild animals, farm livestock, pets	<p>Activity leader to research the existence of any flora and fauna that may invoke risk in the area being visited before an activity takes place.</p> <p>Participants advised to wear suitable clothing that covers the skin and minimises plant, animal, and insect bites. Participants to inform the activity leader of an allergies in advance and carry epi-pens if required.</p> <p>Participants briefed not to approach or touch any wild animals or farm livestock. If they find themselves in the vicinity of wild animals, quietly remove themselves from the situation. Stay out of the sea to prevent contact with marine-related wildlife encounters. Participants not to approach farm livestock and avoid entering the same field where possible.</p> <p>Do not approach / stroke dogs. Dogs belonging to participants must remain on a lead at all times during activities.</p>	1	4	4	None required.
b. Microbiological	Catching and spreading of	If participants are unwell before the start of an activity, they will be asked not to take	2	3	6	None required.

	<p>infectious disease (e.g., colds and flu, Covid-19). Lyme disease, water-borne and food-borne diseases</p>	<p>part. If they become unwell during an activity, they must let the activity leader aware immediately, and will be escorted back to the meeting point to organise transport home. Any vulnerable participants to make themselves known before an activity and keep a suitable distance from others.</p> <p>Participants to be aware of ticks and symptoms of Lyme Disease resulting from tick bites. Symptoms develop in 3 stages, firstly joint pain + flu-like symptoms, usually within a month of being infected, and often (but not always) accompanied by the development of a bulls-eye shaped rash (clear centre with a red ring). Participants aware they have been bitten by a tick and develop these symptoms you should consult a GP for a blood test.</p> <p>Participants will be reminded of good food hygiene standards if eating during an activity. Participants will be told not to drink from any streams, rivers, ponds, or other water sources unless from a formal, clean drinking source.</p>				
1.3 Human hazards						
<p>a. Getting lost</p>	<p>Participants losing the group during an activity</p>	<p>All participants will have a map showing the intended route for an activity. This will include a designated meeting point (usually the meeting point for the start of an activity). The proposed meeting point should be in the vicinity of mobile phone signal. Participants will be given the Ordnance Survey grid reference and What</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>None required.</p>

		<p>Three Words of the meeting point. All participants will have the contact details of the activity leader. All locations visited have designated emergency action plans and evacuation routes that are carried on all of the activities.</p> <p>In the event of participants losing sight of the main party, they will be instructed to go back to the meeting point. The activity leader will constantly check the group numbers, and if they notice someone is missing the whole group will return to the meeting point.</p>				
b. Health and fitness	Participant pre-existing health conditions, disabilities, lack of fitness	<p>Information on activity accessibility will be provided to participants beforehand. Participants to receive information on how to prepare for an activity and an explanation of what to expect. Participants advised to ensure a reasonable level of fitness in advance of an activity. Participants to inform the activity leader of any pre-existing health conditions that may impact them on an activity beforehand.</p> <p>The activity leader reserves the right to refuse participation to anyone whose health or fitness, clothing, or equipment may affect the safety if themselves or other participants.</p>	2	2	4	None required.
c. Experience	Inexperience of area, unfamiliar surroundings, unskilled in outdoors, lack of awareness	The activity leader possesses adequate experience and awareness of areas visited and outdoor skills. Inexperienced participants will be informed beforehand of what to expect during an activity, given a	2	1	2	None required.

		verbal safety briefing at the start of an activity, and guidance throughout.				
d. Toilets	Formal toilet facilities during an activity	Where possible, all locations will have public toilet facilities. However, given the nature of some activities this is not always possible. Toilet facilities (or lack thereof) at different localities visited will be advertised to participants in advance so individuals can plan ahead.	3	1	3	None required.
e. Alcohol and recreational drugs	Use of alcohol and recreational drugs during an activity	No alcohol or recreational drugs to be consumed during an activity. Participants must be deemed fit to take part in an activity beforehand. Any participant under the influence of alcohol or recreational drugs during an activity will be asked to leave.	1	1	1	None required.
f. Behaviour	Disrupting an activity, loud and aggressive, acting unsafe, clogging footpaths, littering, graffitiing	Participants are expected to follow standards outlined in the Cornwall Geologist Code of Conduct . Any form of discrimination, harassment, or misconduct will not be tolerated and will be dealt with promptly. Activity leader to monitor behaviour and provide guidance to participants before and during an activity. Any reports of misconduct will be investigated, and appropriate action will be taken, which may include removal from activities, activities being abandoned, or further legal action.	2	2	4	None required.
g. Social media	Negative reaction to social media posts	Participants will be encouraged to share experiences on social media. However, even if meant in good faith, social media posts can sometimes be taken out of context or show something that can cause	1	4	4	None required.

		<p>offence. Participants will be briefed on giving thought to any posts or media that are uploaded to prevent anyone causing offence to others.</p> <p>The activity leader may take photos and videos to post on social media channels for advertising and marketing purposes. If any participants appear in media, permission must be obtained from them beforehand.</p>				
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2: definitions on likelihood, severity, and risk scoring system

A. Likelihood scoring definitions					
Description	1	2	3	4	5
	Rare	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost certain
Frequency	Not expected to occur for years	Expected to occur at least annually	Expected to occur at least monthly	Expected to occur at least weekly	Expected to occur at least daily
Probability	< 1%	1 – 5%	6 – 20%	21 – 50%	> 50%
	Will only occur in exceptional circumstances	Unlikely to occur	Reasonable chance of occurring	Likely to occur	More likely to occur than not

B. Severity scoring definitions						
Hazard description	Ref.	1	2	3	4	5
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Injury	a	Minor injury not requiring first aid treatment	Minor injury (e.g., cut, bruise) / illness (e.g., faint) requiring first aid treatment	Moderate injury (e.g., sprain strain, fractures) / ill health / absent from work for more than 3 days but less than 7 days	Major / multiple injuries / long-term incapacity / disability / absent from work for 7 days or more	Severe injury / multiple persons injured / permanent incapacity / fatality
Customer experience	b	Unsatisfactory experience (resolved)	Unsatisfactory experience (readily resolved)	Miss-managed (short term effects)	Miss-managed (long term effects)	Total unsatisfactory outcome or experience
Complaint / claim potential	c	Locally resolved complaint	Justified complaint	Below excess claim / justified complaint involving lack of appropriate care	Claim above excess level / multiple justified complaints	Multiple claims or single major claim
Service interruption	d	Loss / interruption <1 hour	Loss / interruption >8 hours	Loss / interruption >1 day	Loss / interruption >1 week	Permanent loss of service or facility
Financial	e	Small loss >£100	Loss >£1,000	Loss >£10,000	Loss >£100,000	Loss >£1,000,000
Inspection / audit	f	Minor recommendations / minor non-compliance with standards	Recommendations given / non-compliance with standards	Challenging recommendations / non-compliance	Enforcement Action / multiple challenging recommendations / major non-compliance	Prosecution / severely critical report
Adverse publicity / reputation	g	Rumours	Local Media (short-term)	Local Media (long-term)	National Media <3 days	National Media >3 days

Assessment of risk formula:

$$\text{Likelihood score (A)} \times \text{Severity score (B)} = \text{Risk score (C)}$$

C. Overall risk rating score						
		Consequence				
		1 – Insignificant	2 – Minor	3 – Moderate	4 – Major	5 – Catastrophic
Likelihood	1 – Rare	1	2	3	4	5
	2 – Unlikely	2	4	6	8	10
	3 – Possible	3	6	9	12	15
	4 – Likely	4	8	12	16	20
	5 – Almost certain	5	10	15	20	25

Key:

	Low risk – no additional actions required
	Moderate risk – additional actions required to improve control measures and reduce risk
	High risk – consider changing itinerary to improve control measures and reduce risk