

# Hillwalking



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0845 300 1818

## Introduction

This factsheet looks to give the facts a person would need to know to run Hillwalking for a group of young people, or to do it for themselves if they are a young person. It should be read in conjunction with the factsheet FS120084 Scout Led Activities Index, and Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) of The Scout Association.

## What is Hillwalking?

Hillwalking is the movement on foot over hills and mountains. It doesn't require any specialist equipment such as climbing ropes (although there are occasions when they can be useful) and can take place in varying terrains from gentle slopes and valleys through to wild remote areas. Hillwalking doesn't have to be about climbing peaks. It can be just as much about enjoying the terrain you are walking in and developing navigational skills.

## What is a Hillwalking Permit?

The adventurous activity permit scheme is designed to ensure that only people with the relevant skills and experience lead adventurous activities for the young people. Therefore all activities classed as adventurous can only be led by someone holding the appropriate permit. Additionally young people (under 18) can take part in adventurous activities for themselves with personal activity permits.

A Hillwalking permit is required for all Hillwalking activities that take place in Terrain 1 or Terrain 2. Definitions of these terrains can be found in POR. Hillwalking activities in Terrain 0 do not require a Hillwalking permit.

## Levels of Permit

There are four levels of permit available for Hillwalking. These are:

- Terrain 1 Summer conditions
- Terrain 1 Winter conditions
- Terrain 2 Summer conditions
- Terrain 2 Winter conditions

Definitions of Summer and Winter conditions can be found later in this factsheet.

Additionally, each of these permits can be further restricted (such as through geographical locations etc) to end up with an individual permit to the level of the competence and requirements of the individual.

## Types of Permit

There are three types of permit available for Hillwalking. These are:

- **Personal** – Allows a young person (under 18) to take part in Hillwalking with others with a personal Hillwalking permit.
- **Leadership** – Allows the permit holder to lead Hillwalking for a single group.
- **Supervisory** – Allows the permit holder to remotely supervise more than one Hillwalking group.

## Permit Limitations

- **Personal** – If you hold a personal Hillwalking permit you can go Hillwalking with others who hold a personal Hillwalking permit. It does not allow you to go Hillwalking with anyone not holding a Hillwalking permit.

- **Leadership** – If you have a permit to lead Hillwalking then you will need to be with your group at all times. Details of group sizes for Hillwalking can be found in POR.
- **Supervisory** – If you hold a permit to supervise Hillwalking then you can supervise up to three groups remotely. This should be from no further away than 3km if on foot, or 10km if in a vehicle. You should also ensure that adequate systems have been set up to monitor and communicate with the group. You remain responsible for all the groups you are supervising, but will need to designate someone with the appropriate skills to be the leader of each group.

### Designations

When remotely supervising groups the holder of a Hillwalking supervisor permit needs to designate a leader for each group. This designation lasts only for the current activity while the permit holder is supervising.

People designated as group leaders should hold the skills and be responsible enough to lead a group safely in the terrain in which they are. There is no problem with making young people group leaders if they have the correct skills, as this can be a useful development tool.

### Supervision

The total number of people being supervised should always be kept to a manageable level and supervision should be provided in the immediate vicinity of the group. This distance may be increased if travelling between check-points by vehicle, however, the risk associated with check-pointing should be a consideration when travelling between check points. You should also ensure that adequate systems have been set up to monitor and communicate with the group. The difficulties of remote supervision should not be underestimated especially under winter conditions with the additional potential hazards associated with reduced visibility and snow covered terrain.

Further guidance can be found in the publication Remote Supervision Guidance Notes available from Mountain Leader Training England (MLTE).

### Further Definitions

**Winter** refers to when winter conditions, including snow and ice, prevail or are forecast. This cannot be defined by a portion of the year. Snow / ice cover is not the only defining feature. Severe cold, high winds and shortened daylight hours should also be considered.

**Summer** means any condition not covered under winter.

**Scrambling** is defined as those routes or areas where the average person would need to use their hands at least for balance if not for actual progress. This does not stop people from using their hands as an aid to confidence.

**Travelling Time** means the time it would take a person to walk by the quickest safe route; and for this purpose a person shall be deemed to walk at 5 kilometres per hour and to take, in addition, one minute for every 10 metres of increase in the height above sea level of any uphill section of that route.

**Valid First Aid Qualifications** as required for Hillwalking in Terrain 2 are defined in the factsheet [FS120052 Full First Aid Certificate: Definition and the Wearing of Badges](#).

### Useful Links

[FS120084](#) Scout Led Activities Index  
(References relevant Rules and guidance)

[FS120086](#) Commercially Led Activities Index

[FS120100](#) Adventurous Activity Permit Scheme