

CODE OF PRACTICE

All clubs and societies are affiliated to Lancaster University Students Union and are therefore bound by the Union regulations and constitution.

The Exec are required to follow all safety guidance from LUSU, the LUSU Safety Framework, and all safety documentation for the group and the activity they are doing. The Exec are also responsible for ensuring the members are made aware of all relevant safety documentation and the safety responsibilities they and the members hold.

In addition to this document the LUSU General Code of Practice must be followed.

Club/Society: Hiking Club

The Aims of the Club/Society:

The Club exists to promote the interests of hiking amongst members of the Club and to encourage safe practice and appreciation of the open countryside.

To provide an opportunity for members of the Club to meet and participate in hiking activities together.

To act on behalf of and in the interests of Club members.

To promote awareness of the need to maintain access, conservation and protection of the mountain environment

The following constitutes the clubs/societies procedures which must be followed by all members so that all activities are carried out safely:

Area of activity: Hiking

Procedures to follow

- All trip organisers must be subscribed to the emergency text service so they can alert mountain rescue where there is limited signal. They must also have the University Security's contact number in case of emergencies.
- The information of the proposed route is always provided to other members by announcement; this information is also recorded on a route sheet (Pink Sheet) of the planned walk. This is filled in by a member of the hiking party and includes; the members in the group, the route they are taking, what equipment they have, how long they will be and relevant contact details.
- The route sheet will be placed in the window of the minibus so that other

groups and organisations can see where they have gone in case of emergency.

- When planning the routes the trip organiser will make sure that there are plenty of escape routes to use in case of emergency.
- The trip organiser will provide advice to members on the suitability of routes, but it is the responsibility of individual members to decide which route is most appropriate for them. Members are responsible for their own safety and wellbeing whilst out hiking.
- All members must be dressed appropriately for the conditions and always carry plenty of water, extra food (high sugar content), and extra clothing in case of unintended overnight activity. The group will also carry spare warm clothing and a shelter (kissu) between them for emergencies. The trip organiser will check members clothing before leaving Lancaster to ensure it is suitable; if clothing is not suitable the member will not be able to participate.
- The trip organiser will also check all group members to make sure they are wearing the correct footwear i.e. walking boots. If they have not got the correct footwear they are not allowed on the trip.
- The Exec will notify members before the trip of what gear is required by means of the equipment list in the trip e-mail. For forecasted hot weather, extra water, sun cream, and caps will be recommended.
- In cold weather, members are advised to take a hot drink with them on trips. This is listed on the 'recommended equipment' list which is near the bottom of all trip e-mails.
- The trip organiser must check the hike area for avalanche risk and check the weather and avalanche forecast before starting the hike. Routes will be planned so that they avoid avalanche prone locations. Before a trip to areas with heavy snow the trip organiser must remind all members of the avalanche procedures.
- All members must use the agreed code for falling rocks by shouting "Below!". Routes will be planned so that they avoid rock fall prone locations and everyone must use caution when walking near climbing crags.
- The trip organiser will make sure people are well informed of the hazards and how to safely navigate them before starting to hike into a hazard location. If the route goes near a large drop the members should warn each other before they reach it.
- In larger walking groups experienced members will be spread throughout the group to help less experienced members.
- The trip organiser will ensure that all members have been given the full description of what the walk entails before leaving, and that new members are given advice on which walk to pick.
- Hiking parties will carry sufficient safety equipment between them to deal with extreme weather situations or an exposure situation.
- The trip organiser will make sure all routes are well planned by each party so that they are appropriate for the level of the group.
- Only routes away from more exposed areas will be used for low and medium groups to reduce the risk of falls.

- Parties will be strongly advised by the trip organiser not to attempt any expedition unless at least one member of the party has experienced a similar situation and is confident (e.g. members are advised not to attempt routes involving axes or crampons unless accompanied by someone experienced in their use).
- The trip organiser will make sure the members on the trip are supplied with gear which is in good working order; before the trip members are taught by the more experienced members how to use the gear in a correct manner, and check that the gear is appropriate for the intended locations (i.e. crampons and walking axe in icy conditions).
- All members of the hiking party must look for dangers and announce them to the group.
- There will always be a full first aid kit present within each group. Items in the first aid kit are to be kept within the expiry date. No medications or creams are to be kept in a first aid kit being used for the group.
- All group members are expected to keep a check on the condition of the group to make sure the pace is suitable and ensure stoppage breaks and food stops are regularly taken to reduce the effect of fatigue. Adjustments to the route will be made by consensus if the group struggles with the planned route.
- When crossing rivers they must be crossed at footbridges where available. Water river crossings will not be attempted until it is the last possible option; a water crossing will be done in a group with strongest members on the outside, or in a line reducing the surface exposed to the current.
- Routes will be planned so that they avoid water river crossings.
- Members are expected to make someone else in the group aware if they cannot swim when near deep or fast flowing water; keep members who cannot swim away from the water's edge and if necessary, avoid the hazard area.
- It is advised for all members to carry insect repellent, especially during summer months.
- The trip advisor will ensure members of the hiking group are advised that water treatment should be used for natural water sources. Natural water sources are only be used as a last resort and selected from fast flowing water as high up as is available to reduce risk. Avoid water flowing from still bodies of water.
- The trip advisor will check the weather forecast beforehand to make sure the weather is appropriate for the planned hike. The group should all constantly assess the conditions and if the conditions deteriorate to the point where the planned route would be unsafe, an alternative route / escape route will be taken.
- All new trip organisers must have previously been on at least two trips with the club. The exec will provide first time trip organisers with a check list of duties and give advice where required. New trip organisers are expected to have a rigorous understanding of this code of practice.
- The club will, where possible, provide training evenings/ weekends; it is expected that all new trip organisers will go on the training when it is available.

- All members must carry torches (ideally a head torch), particularly during autumn, winter and spring as many walks may involve a certain amount of walking in the dark. Members will be made aware that the length of many walks may result, particularly during winter, in a considerable amount of walking in the dark.
- Where a walk is planned to involve walking in the dark, the trip advisor will inform members of this when they announce the walks. If all routes on the trip are planned to involve walking in the dark this will be announced before people sign up to the trip. When planning walks which involve walking in the dark the route will use the simplest route with the safest terrain for that section of the walk.
- The Exec must be aware of shooting seasons and locations and inform the trip organisers. The exec must check with landowners that no shooting will be taking place in the location of the hiking; any area where shooting will take place must be avoided.
- All members must be courteous and respectful to other members of the public and landowners, following waymarked routes through private land.
- The outgoing Gear Officer will train the new Gear Officer on all aspects of equipment and safety checks. The Gear Officer will train trip organisers on performing safety checks on gear before trips.
- The Gear Officer will fully check all equipment for damage and wear at least once a term. Damaged items will be removed from use until they are repaired or replaced.
- The trip organiser will check the safety gear to make sure it is in working order before setting off on the hiking trip.
- Before leaving campus people must physically check their own rucksacks for the essential kit (given on trip emails) to make sure no one has forgotten an essential item.
- The exec will make sure correct group management is followed by the trip organiser and in determining the correct group size relative to the hiking environment and group ability.
- There will be several walks of differing levels available on each trip and the people on the trip will be split into different level groups, if there is a mixed ability group then the group will go at the pace of the slowest person.
- All members must attend the intro talk at the start of the year which contains information about safety, use of equipment, and the club. Anyone who joins the club after this talk will be taken through the club handbook by an exec member and made aware of the essential equipment list. Members are also advised to attend any training sessions that may be organised through the year.
- All members must read the Code of Practice before being allowed to participate in any hiking activity.
- All members need to sign a declaration to say they understand hiking is a high risk activity and that they have received all the safety information and understand it before they can participate in any hiking activity.
- If the conditions mean that crampons and an ice axes are needed, members are shown how to fit crampons and told about ice axe arrest before setting off on the walk.

- The Exec will keep a database of those who have signed the declaration.
- All members must carry their own personal medication with them at all times and if in doubt as to whether they should attend contact their doctor before going on the trip. The trip organiser will remind members before leaving to have their medication.
- Members must be advised to tell the trip organiser of any relevant medical details before they begin any walk.
- If anyone is uncertain as to whether any medical condition/injury will be affected by hiking, they need to check with a medical professional before participating.

Area of activity: Travelling

Procedures to follow

- The exec will ensure that all the drivers have passed the University minibus test and are registered with the AU before transporting any member of LUHC in a minibus. All drivers must follow the minibus driver's handbook.
- The driver will inform passengers that they must be wearing seatbelts; all members must wear seatbelts. The driver had the right not to drive if he/she thinks the conditions are unsafe (i.e. a passenger not wearing a seatbelt).
- When walking on roads members must be extra vigilant and walk in single file facing oncoming traffic; and walk on the outside of bends. In poor light conditions torches must be used to increase visibility of the group on the road; where possible walking on roads in the dark will be avoided.
- When arriving and leaving destinations or after any stop the trip advisor will ensure a head count is conducted to make sure nobody is left behind.

Area of activity: Camping

Procedures to follow

- The Exec will offer advice on the safe use of cooking stoves and the hazards associated with the use of methylated spirits and petrol. All members who will be using stoves must be aware of the necessary safety precautions and correct method of use.
- When using methylated spirits or petrol it must be done in a well ventilated area away from anything flammable. All cooking must be done away from tents.
- Anyone who uses flammable liquids (methylated spirits) must first have been briefed by the Gear Officer or Exec on the safe use and storage of these liquids.
- The Gear Officer, Exec and Trip organisers will make sure that when not in use methylated spirits are correctly stored in labelled silver sigg bottles; the use of these chemicals must be carried out within well ventilated locations.
- The Exec and Trip organisers will provide information and guidance on the correct pitching of tents; especially for pitching tents in the dark.

- The Gear Officer will fully check all equipment for damage and wear at least once a term. Damaged items will be removed from use until they are repaired or replaced. Tents will be dried after use by members to prevent mold and damage. The tent deposit will be returned to members after the tent is returned dry and in the same condition as when it was leant out.
- The trip organiser and Exec will check the campsite to make sure it is in a suitable condition for the pitching of tents and advise all members on the hazards of the campsite.
- During the trip the organiser and Exec must know where all the group equipment is and who is carrying it. If equipment is moved the individual must inform the trip organiser/Exec.
- Members must be vigilant and secure their own property; especially their safety equipment and essential items.
- All Members must maintain high levels of hygiene whether cooking for themselves or during communal cooking; this will be enforced by the Exec and trip organiser with knowledge from food safety trained Exec persons.
- Members and Exec must only cook for themselves; where they cook for others a food safety person must be present to supervise.
- Members will be given advice from the Exec on food safety for all types of trips, and how to avoid food poisoning, with the knowledge coming from a food safety trained person.
- The Exec will ensure there is a sufficient supply of clean cooking facilities and equipment before leaving for a trip.

Duty of Care

Please note that on top of the above procedures, all individual members of the society owe a Duty of Care to fellow members of the society and other societies, and where appropriate the public. Any society member who acts in such a way as to deliberately cause harm or injury to a fellow member and/or who displays open and persistent disregard for the societies Code of Practice will be disciplined by the society executive committee and may face expulsion from the society.