



# ONTARIO TECH

## WALKING RISKS GUIDELINES

Embarking on a leisurely walk can be a delightful and invigorating activity, offering opportunities for exercise, fresh air, and exploration. However, amidst the enjoyment, it's crucial to acknowledge the potential risks that accompany such outings. From slips and falls to exposure to exhaustion and the elements, there are several factors to consider for a safe and enjoyable walking experience.

- **Risks of Injury (Slips/Falls):**
  - Ensure **appropriate running shoes** / walking shoes / boots are worn by participants.
  - Walking on smooth surfaces / barrier free
    - **Avoid** uneven pavement/ground
  - Snow: is it clear? Should it be cleared? Are the participants aware of/familiar with the terrain?
  - Appropriate route for age / fitness level of participants
    - Know the level of incline.
  - Certified hiker with group at all times recommended.
  - Basic **first aid kit** (pouch) recommended.
  - Conduct a "**self-health check**" to ensure everyone feels well enough to participate.
    - Ensure that all participants muscle's such as back, hip, ankle, foot pain are known and addressed before starting.
    - Ensure that all participants **gaits are stable**.
- **Exposure to Exhaustion:**
  - Take **breaks as needed**.
    - Conduct regular checks on participants health before continuing route.
  - Fluids available before / during / after walk – **stay hydrated**.
  - Keep a consistent level of intensity for walks, don't go too intensive right away
- **Awareness of Surroundings**
  - **Avoid** the use of ear buds (or keep the volume to a minimum)
  - Appropriate **sunglasses** to avoid glare as misstep can occur/changes in pavement/ground.
  - Be mindful of signage.
  - **Provide maps** of walk if there's a risk of getting lost / trespassing
  - Be always considerate of others / environment.
    - Be mindful and cognizant of wildlife.
  - While walking under dense trees, recommended to wear glasses to avoid "twig in the eye".
  - Always try to walk in groups, **avoid walking alone**.
    - Always be in the sight of others.
    - Stay on the path / avoid roadways, small alleyways.
  - Carry a cellphone or an alert button to **contact emergency responders**.
- **Exposure to weather**
  - Be mindful of weather prior to walk.
    - Wear **appropriate clothing**.
      - Bring extra clothing where appropriate (socks, gloves, layers)
      - Put on sunscreen / hat if necessary.
    - Check forecast for the **estimated duration** of the entire walk.
  - Be mindful of **daylight**.
    - Know if there's any shade on route beforehand.
  - **Avoid** walks in the evening.

If you have any inquiries regarding this document, please contact the Office of Risk Management at [orm@ontariotechu.ca](mailto:orm@ontariotechu.ca).