

BRITISH PTERIDOLOGICAL SOCIETY SAFETY CODE

In common with other scientific and natural history societies, the BPS has drawn up a safety code for its meetings, in particular field meetings. Every meeting leader will have a copy for consultation by participants but every participant should read the code and take the appropriate responsible action for each meeting he or she attends.

PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS

The BPS will, through the meeting leader, at the beginning of the meeting, draw the attention of participants to the points below. It is the duty of all participants to practise extreme care and common sense and not to take risks. The following points are particularly important in taking ultimate responsibility for your own safety:

1. Ensure that you are adequately clothed and equipped.
2. Never leave the main party without notifying the leader of your plans.
3. Pay particular attention to the hazards of the terrain and their potential danger, as a result of your actions, to others. For example, be careful not to dislodge loose stones and boulders.
4. Do not rock-climb without experience and the proper equipment.
5. Do not damage walls, fences, hedges, gates, etc.
6. Leave gates open/shut as the party finds them.
7. Take care not to start a fire.
8. Familiarise yourself with the procedure to adopt in the event of an accident in the field.

CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

Always carry windproof and waterproof outer clothing and wear suitable footwear, e.g. walking boots or, in certain circumstances, wellingtons. All clothing should be suitable for the job (e.g. jeans not recommended) and for the worst potential weather. Carry sufficient food and drink for the excursion, with some extra in case of emergency. A first-aid kit is also advisable.

In mountains, the following are necessary:

1. Two warm, long-sleeved sweaters of wool or similar material.
2. Properly fitting walking or climbing boots with commando-type or Vibram soles, worn over suitable woollen socks. Footwear should be waterproof but wellingtons should not be worn.
3. A rucksack with spare sweater and (if not being worn) anorak/cagoule and over-trousers.
4. A whistle, compass, maps, torch, first-aid kit.
5. A survival bag if more than ½-hour from the nearest inhabited place.

At all outdoor meetings, it is worth considering carrying an emergency survival blanket. They can be obtained, for approximately £3, from retail outlets selling outdoor leisure clothing and equipment. They are very light (c.85 g) and occupy very little space.

PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT IN THE FIELD

First-aid must be rendered at once, and medical and relief help should be sought if necessary. Prevention of exposure is almost always possible through adequate clothing, equipment and procedure, but if a case is suspected the initial treatment is additional warm clothing and a windproof or waterproof outer garment, plus ingestion of a source of rapidly absorbed food, such as sugar or glucose in solid or liquid form, preferably hot liquid.

THE INTERNATIONAL DISTRESS CODE IN MOUNTAINS

Six long flashes/blasts/shouts/waves in succession, repeated at 1-minute intervals.

The following publication may also prove helpful: Jackson, J. *et al.* (reprinted 1982) *Safety in Mountains*. Obtainable from the British Mountaineering Council, Crawford House, Precinct Centre, Manchester University, Booth Street East, Manchester, M13 9RZ.