

Restarting Ramblers activities

Path maintenance

This guide outlines the steps that **path maintenance team leaders** must take to organise activities safely.

1. Planning the task

✔ Talk to your team

We know that COVID-19 has affected everyone in different ways. Before volunteering, everyone should **consider their personal circumstances**. There is no obligation to volunteer, now or ever!

Read our [Quick Guide to Restarting Ramblers Activities](#) for the key questions you should ask before volunteering.

Explain how you will be working, and make sure that everyone knows what they need to do to keep themselves and others safe.



Every volunteer must have their role recorded with us.

To record your volunteer role, email volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com with your name, path team & membership number (if you have one). Team leaders can also send a list of everyone in their team.

✔ Check with the local authority

In England & Wales, you must make sure the local authority is happy for you to restart activities and can sign off your work.

In Scotland, we recommend informing your local Access Officer. Find yours [here](#).

✔ Talk to the landowner

You should also check that the landowner and anyone else living or working nearby who might be affected is happy for work to go ahead. Talk to them about the best way to manage this – remember they may be 'clinically vulnerable'.

The local authority may already have contacted the landowner – check with them first.

✔ Think about new ways of working

You may need to change how and when you normally work. Some activities such as gate or bridge construction may not be possible.

In Scotland, you **must** remain at least 2m away from others.

In England & Wales, we **strongly recommend** avoiding tasks which require close contact (closer than 2m). If you choose to work in this way, you **must**:

- Remain at least 1m away
- Avoid working face-to-face
- Limit the time you are working in this way
- Work with the same people each time – use a pair system



Tasks where team members can spread out along the path (such as vegetation clearance) may be easier to manage than work on gates or stiles. Check what sort of tasks are available for you to do locally.

✔ Limit numbers and keep a record of everyone in the work party.

You must assess the work site, and limit numbers as needed so that there's room for everyone to work safely.

You must also keep a record of everyone in your work party, in case this is needed for NHS contact tracing. (This might include a local authority officer or landowner if they are present.)



If you are contacted about a case of COVID-19 in your work party, please let us know at volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com

✔ Understand & manage the risks

You must complete and keep a risk assessment for every work party – including details of your actions to reduce the risks from COVID-19.

We've created a [risk assessment template](#) to help plan the steps you need to take to stay safe.

✔ Do a site visit

You should visit the site before starting work, to make a note of hazards and plan any adjustments. (If you are working with the local authority, they may have done this for you.)

Remember to think about:

- How many people can work safely while maintaining physical distancing?
- Is there enough space for walkers to safely pass while you're working?
- Is there enough parking space for everyone to arrive, unload tools and materials and maintain physical distancing?

It may be helpful to stagger arrival times so that there's plenty of space.

✔ Follow the latest government guidance on travel and transport

Check the latest guidance for [England](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#).

2. On the day of task

✔ Be prepared

Bring a first aid kit and face covering in case of incidents, a fully charged mobile phone and alcohol-based hand sanitiser.

✔ Give a team briefing

Remember to highlight any risks and safety measures. Remind everyone to maintain physical distancing – this is everyone's responsibility.

✔ Be considerate to other path users

You should stop working and step back to let others pass safely. We recommend wearing hi-vis clothing so that it's clear you are working on the path. We can provide hi vis vests – email volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com.

✔ Distribute equipment and materials carefully

Wherever possible, **avoid sharing tools and equipment**. Think about assigning tasks to reduce the need to share or swap tools.

If one person is responsible for transporting tools – lay them out in advance, so that people can collect what they need one at a time.

If you do share equipment, wipe down the handle with a disinfectant spray between each use.

✔ Maintain physical distancing

See 'Think about new ways of working' above for what you must do.

For more detailed advice, see the latest government guidelines in [England](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#).

✘ Do not share food & drink

✔ Wash your hands regularly

Bring alcohol-based sanitiser and encourage everyone to maintain good hygiene.

3. After the task

✔ Leave the site clear and free from hazards

Dispose of any material responsibly, in line with local authority policy.

✔ Get your work signed off

Get your work signed off by the local authority (for public rights of way in England & Wales) or landowner (for other paths, including those in Scotland).

Use our [path maintenance sign-off sheet](#) – or the local authority's own form if they have one.



Please also send photos & sign off forms to us, so that we can share the great work volunteers do to protect the path network:

volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com.

✔ Report any incidents or near misses

Complete an [Incident Report Form](#) within ten days, and send it to us by email at incidents@ramblers.org.uk