

30-Hour Famine Famine Walk Safety Guide

A. Things to note before enrolment

Famine Walk participants are required to engage in outdoor activities while fasting, which may prove to be challenging for certain individuals. Prior to enrolment, participants should take their own health status into consideration, and take sole responsibility for any accident, injury or illness that they may suffer as a result of their participation in the event.

People with any of the following conditions are not recommended to participate in the **Famine Walk:**

- 1) Chronic illnesses, such as diabetes mellitus, coronary and cerebrovascular diseases
- 2) Malnutrition
- 3) Reduced mobility
- 4) On chronic medication
- 5) Psychological illnesses, such as anxiety disorder and panic attacks
- 6) Pregnancy
- 7) Gastrointestinal illnesses
- 8) Substance or alcoholic abuse

Remark: Please seek medical advice if you have any doubt.

B. Things to note before the event

1. General Safety Guidelines

- Rest well on the night before the event.
- Don't join the walk if you are not feeling well.
- Wear the Famine T-shirt provided by World Vision and trousers. You may also bring sun protection products (such as a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen), a jacket, mosquito repellents that are **NOT** in pressurised-gas cans, a hiking stick, a raincoat and an umbrella.
- Bring an extra towel and a spare set of clothes for change.
- Bring a water bottle to refill at our refill stations. Dairy and electrolyte beverages will be provided before the Walk. To reduce waste, the organiser will not distribute plastic bottles during the event.
- Don't overload yourself with bulky objects. As there will be no baggage storage service, participants are advised to pack light.
- Rest at intervals. Don't overstrain.

2. Air Quality Health Index

Participants should pay attention to the announcement from the radio / TV broadcast on AQHI, and take special notice of the following advice issued by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) when the AQHI reaches 8-10/10+:

AQHI level 8-10

Individuals with existing heart or respiratory illnesses (such as coronary heart and cardiovascular diseases, asthma, chronic bronchitis and chronic obstructive airways diseases) are advised to reduce to the minimum outdoor physical exertion, and to reduce to the minimum the time of their stay outdoors, especially in areas with heavy traffic.

AQHI level 10+

Individuals with existing heart or respiratory illnesses (such as coronary heart and cardiovascular diseases, asthma, chronic bronchitis and chronic obstructive airways diseases) are advised to avoid outdoor physical exertion, and to avoid staying outdoors, especially in areas with heavy traffic.

Please visit www.epd.gov.hk for details on AQHI.

C. Things to note during the event

1. General Safety Guidelines

- Take appropriate breaks and don't overload yourself.
- As you will continuously dissipate energy during the walk, drink water or electrolyte beverages regularly from time to time to replenish the water and energy lost.
- Do not drink only when you feel thirsty.
- Optimal hydration state keeps your muscles away from easy fatigue and maintains oxygen perfusion to muscle. This is very important to elevate your performance level.
- There will be first aid stations along the trail for participants in need.

2. Metabolic or Electrolyte Disturbances

- When sweating excessively, the body may become dehydrated. This will lead to a decrease of blood volume and affect the blood flow and so the oxygen supply to muscles (hypoxia). Muscle strength and endurance will deteriorate accordingly. If the condition is not treated appropriately, this will lead to muscle spasms, heat cramps, and even heat strokes.
- Replenish 150-250 ml of water every 10-15 minutes (rehydration) will help to prevent the decrease in blood volume, the rise in body temperature and pulse rate.

Symptoms

Dizziness, exhaustion, muscle spasm, unconsciousness and convulsion.

Emergency Measures

- You should stop and seek help from the event helpers once you experience the above symptoms.
- Drink electrolyte beverages to replenish water and salt.
- If the patient is confused and unconscious, don't attempt to force him/her to drink.

3. Blood Glucose Level Imbalance

- Participants should drink beverages with glucose. When the glucose is absorbed in gut and diffused into circulation, it will be transported to muscle tissues directly for energy utilisation.
- For a normal person, the storage amount of glucose is less than 1,200 calories, which can easily be used up during the walk. Please be reminded that inadequate glucose level will have a direct effect on your health status.

4. Hypoglycaemia

Insufficient energy reserve and significant energy dissipation during the walk may lead to hypoglycaemia.

Symptoms

Paleness, clammy skin, hasty and shallow breathing, tachycardia, exhaustion, dizziness, muscle spasm, and convulsion in severe cases.

Emergency Measures

- You should stop and seek help from the event helpers once you experience the above symptoms.
- Drink beverages with glucose.
- Massage muscles suffering from cramps gently.

5. Heat Strokes and Exhaustion

A heat stroke is caused when one is unable to regulate body temperature through transpiration at high ambient temperatures. The victim would feel hot, dizzy, anxious and even become unconscious. When the body temperature exceeds 40°C, the victim's skin will become dry and flushed, while respiratory and pulse rates will increase. In some serious cases, the victim will go into shock. It is important to lower his/her body temperature and seek medical assistance immediately.

Overheating of the body will also lead to heat exhaustion which usually occurs when one is

engaged in sports during hot and humid weather, especially when one fails to replenish his/her body fluid and salt lost through sweating.

Symptoms

Exhaustion, headache, dizziness, nausea, muscle spasm, paleness, clammy skin, rapid but weak breath and pulse. The body temperature may also drop.

Safety Guidelines

- Have good rests during the walk. Don't over-exert yourself as this would lead to exhaustion.
- Avoid prolonged exposure to direct sunlight. Drink lots of water.

Emergency Measures

- Move the victim to a cool shaded place. Loosen his/her clothing and have him/her lie down with feet elevated; give him/her lots of fluids if he/she is conscious. Avoid the victim being surrounded by people to ensure a free flow of fresh air.
- If necessary, employ other body-cooling techniques like immersion in water, covering in damp sheets and fanning until the first aid team arrives.

6. Accidents

- When you see someone seriously injured on the way, please contact the event helpers and first aid team immediately.
- If possible, at least one group member should accompany and look after the injured while another member calls the organiser to seek help.
- To avoid delay in rescue, the person who goes to seek help should write down the essential information including the details of the incident, the position they are at, as well as the symptoms of the injured. This may reduce any inaccurate report of the situation as he/she may make through poor verbal description when under stress.
- Essential information to be provided while seeking help:
 - 1) Nature/cause of accident
 - 2) Time/location of accident/grid reference/the number of the nearest distance post
 - 3) Terrain/special landmarks in the vicinity
 - 4) Personal details of the injured including his/her name, age, gender, telephone number and address
 - 5) Extent of injury/first aid given
 - 6) Condition of other members
 - 7) Weather condition
 - 8) Other relevant information

Distance Post and “Your Location” Map Coordinate

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department has erected distance posts at about 500m intervals along all long-distance hiking trails as well as all country trails for users to identify their location. In case of emergency, they can state their position by referring to the number on the nearby distance post or the coordinates marked at the location map, thus facilitating search and rescue operation.

D. Weather and Environment

1. Mountain Torrents

The devastating power and speed of a mountain torrent should never be underestimated. A small stream may swell and converge into raging torrents under heavy rain and wash away travellers, resulting in casualties within minutes.

Safety Guidelines

- Avoid hiking along water courses.
- Don't wade into the stream after heavy rain.
- Don't stay at the water course for a rest, especially at its lower reaches.
- When it rains, leave the water course without delay and head for a high spot ashore.
- Never attempt to cross any inundated bridges. In case of heavy rain, leave the water course right away.

Emergency Measures

- Rapid flows, turbid water with sand and mud are early signs of torrents. Leave the water course without delay.
- If you fall into a rapid flow, grip or hold on to the rocks, branches or vines near the banks; try to get ashore and leave the river course right away. Other members should notify the organiser immediately.

2. Landslides

Landslides are not uncommon when a large amount of rainwater has soaked a natural or artificial slope during a downpour or after a few days of heavy rain.

Safety Guidelines

- Avoid going near or staying around steep slopes during heavy rain or after a few days of heavy rain.
- The oozing out of a large quantity of muddy water from the base or the weep holes of a slope indicates that the slope is saturated with water.
- Exposure of inner soil of the slope and appearance of new cracks on the slope are early

signs of a landslide. Keep away from such slopes.

- Don't step on loose mud or try to force your way further if landslide blocks your way; Retreat and inform the organiser immediately.

Emergency Measures

Unless you are fully equipped and properly trained, don't try to rescue life buried in a landslide. You should call for a fully equipped rescue team to avoid further casualties.

3. Hill Fires

Hill fires advance rapidly upward and windward on a steep grass slope in dry weather. Never underestimate its devastating power. During the outbreak of a hill fire, participants should note the advisory and warnings issued, and follow the instruction of on-site staff to stay away from areas that are prone to high fire risk. Do not enter an area that might be affected by an occurring hill fire to ensure safety.

Safety Guidelines

- Handle inflammable materials with great care.
- Don't smoke
- Hill fire is difficult to detect in daylight. Always pay attention to flying ashes or burnt smells. If a hill fire is spotted, leave the fire scene and contact the organiser right away.
- It is difficult to assess the spreading of hill fire. Don't risk continuing your journey in case of a fire nearby or you may get trapped in the fire.

Emergency Measures

- When came across a hill fire, don't panic. Keep calm and inform the organiser immediately.
- Never attempt to put out a hill fire.
- Note the following for a quick evacuation from the scene of fire:
 - 1) The direction in which the fire spreads - avoid escaping in the same direction of the prevailing wind.
 - 2) The gradient of the paths nearby - Choose the one which is easiest for escape. It is easier and quicker to escape through existing paths.
 - 3) The height and density of the vegetation nearby - Find a place with less vegetation for escape.
- If the fire is imminent and there is no way out, you should cover your exposed skin with wet clothing and then make for the burnt area. This can minimise the chance of getting injured.
- Running uphill is exhausting, don't go uphill unless there is no other way out.
- Don't run into shrubs or grass grown area, fire usually spreads rapidly and the temperature may soar in these areas.

4. Lightning Strikes

Lightning normally strikes at the highest point of an object and the electric current is conducted to the ground via the least resistant path. One struck by lightning usually have the symptoms of muscle spasm, scalds, suffocation and cardiac arrest.

Safety Guidelines

- Listen to the weather bulletin. If the weather condition is unstable, the organiser may make changes towards the arrangement of the event and will make announcement of the latest arrangements on World Vision's website and the 30-Hour Famine mobile app.
- Wear shoes or boots with rubber soles.
- Don't make contact with wet substance.

Emergency Measures

- Don't stand on the hilltop or near any highly conductive objects. Stay away from trees and all kinds of posts which are likely to be struck by lightning.
- The electric current of a lightning strike travels through the ground. Never lie down on the damp ground or any wet surface.
- Squat and minimize the contact area with the ground.
- Stay away from iron fences or any metal objects. Remove all metal objects (e.g. gold ornaments) from your body.
- Seek shelter inside of a building if possible.
- Don't touch any antenna, water pipes, iron mesh or other similar metal installations.

5. Dangerous Plants

Some common plants in the wilderness are harmful to humans. For example, wax trees may cause skin allergy, prickly ashes may cause scratches, while certain wild fruits or mushrooms are poisonous and can be fatal if consumed.

Safety Guidelines

- Avoid going into dense bushes.
- Bring a pair of gloves.
- Protect your head and face or any exposed skin areas with handkerchiefs or clothing if you have to pass through a bush.
- Don't touch the wax trees.
- Beware of thorns when gripping on a plant.
- Don't attempt to eat wild fruits/mushrooms.

Emergency Measures

- Seek immediate medical treatment if skin allergy occurs after touching a plant or you are poisoned by wild fruits and mushrooms.

6. Mosquito Bites

Mosquitoes are common in the countryside. Mosquito bites cause temporary itching.

Safety Guidelines

- Wear trousers, and apply DEET-containing insect repellent on clothing and exposed parts of the body.
- Avoid prolonged stay under tree, in grass bushes and hidden places.
- Do not dispose any empty boxes, soft drink cans and plastic bags that can accumulate stagnant water in the countryside.

Emergency Measures

- Beware of the surroundings, stay away from areas where mosquitoes like to breed.
- If bitten by Aedes mosquitoes, keep watch for 3-14 days to see if there are signs of fever, serious headaches, pain behind the eyes, muscle aches and pains, nausea and vomiting. In severe cases, the sickness may progress to bleeding, shock and death. Please receive medical treatment immediately if any of the listed symptoms shows

For more information, please refer to the website of Centre for Health Protection:

<http://www.chp.gov.hk>

7. Bee Stings

Bees, hornets or wasps are common in the countryside. Be careful not to touch their hives (nests), this would avoid being attacked and stung by a swarm of bees.

Safety Guidelines

- Use maintained trails. Don't venture into new paths; avoid going into bushes and ferns where insects and wasps inhabit.
- Don't disturb the beehives. Never strike the bushes with branches or sticks.
- Spray insect-repellent on your body and clothes.
- Don't wear any aromatic products to avoid attracting bees.

Emergency Measures

- If there are only one or two hornets hovering above, ignore them and keep going as usual. If there is a beehive in the way, circumvent it and proceed.

- When attacked by a swarm of hornets, squat still and cover your head and neck with outerwear for protection, or lie curled on the ground and evacuate slowly after the swarm has dispersed.
- If the sting is left in the wound, remove it with a pair of forceps. Don't squeeze the poison gland to prevent any residue poison from entering the body. You may apply a cold compress gently to the wound to soothe the pain.
- Seek medical treatment right away if stung seriously.

8. Wild Boars

Wild boars are generally wary of human contact. If participants see them in the wild, keep calm and wait for them to leave.

Safety Guidelines

Don't provoke or approach them, especially their piglets. If some block the way, walk around them undisturbed and leave.

Emergency Measures

If attacked by a wild boar, notify the organiser immediately.

9. Snakebites

Common venomous snakes in Hong Kong include the banded krait, the many-banded krait, the king cobra, the Chinese cobra and the bamboo pit viper. They are more active in spring, summer and autumn. Under normal circumstances, snakes are generally unaggressive and scared of humans.

Safety Guidelines

- Wear long trousers and hiking boots.
- Walk only on the assigned trails. Don't venture into new paths or walk into overgrown area or mixed forest.

Emergency Measures

- If you encounter a snake, keep calm and still. Let the frightened snake leave the scene itself. Snakes have good eyesight. Fast moving objects may trigger them to fight back.
- Note the following in case of a snakebite:
 - 1) Don't cut or suck the wound. Keep the injured lying down at rest and wash the wound with water. Avoid alcoholic drinks. Don't elevate the wound or make unnecessary movement.
 - 2) Pacify the victim.

3) Notify the organiser immediately to arrange medical treatment. If possible, identify the species, colour and stripes of the snake to facilitate the treatment.

Please refer to the below website of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department for information on Hong Kong's venomous snakes.

http://www.afcd.gov.hk/english/conservation/hkbiodiversity/speciesgroup/speciesgroup_venousnake.html