

Company: Thistle Trekking LTD	Lightning Procedure	Compiled by: Scarlet Trevett
Date completed: November 2011	All procedures should be reviewed if changes are made to the trip, e.g. the group, transport, ratios etc.	Reviewed/Updated: 24.1.2019

Before all guided walks a forecast should be checked to find out if there is a high risk of lightening. If the lightening risk is high then other factors must be considered, these include access to the route by the trek manager both on foot and with emergency transport, the exposed nature of the terrain, the height of the walk, the duration of the walk and the current weather conditions. The decision to proceed with a guided walk when a high risk of lightening is forecast can only be taken by Scarlet, if they cannot be contacted the guided walk must be cancelled for the period of time that the lightening is forecast.

Thistle Trekking LTD can only agree to proceed with a guided walk during high lightening forecasts if all the following conditions are met.

- There is no thunder or lightening when the walk is started and it doesn't look like thunder or lightening are likely.
- The guide must be happy to lead the group and agree with Scarlet.
- The walk does not go to the top of any summits or over any ridges
- The trek manager can get access to the group with emergency transport within 30 minutes of any part of the walk during the forecasted lightening.
- If at any point thunder or lightening starts or the guide feels it may start soon, or the trek manager witnesses it in a nearby area the group must be taken the quickest and safest way to the support vehicle ASAP.

If the above cannot be met, then the walk must be changed, retimed or cancelled.

If lightening does begin during the walk even if it hasn't been forecast then the following must be followed and made aware to the customers.

- Get back to the support vehicle if possible, before the lightning is over yourself and the group.
- If you cannot get back to the support vehicle in time then make sure all summits or exposed ridges are avoided. Ridges and summit are much more likely to be hit by lightning, escape them as quickly as possible if you are on them.
- Don't hide under trees or in caves. If the tree or cave is hit the lightning may pass to you. You are more likely to be hit in the cave or under the tree than you would be if you sat exposed in a field near it.
- If you can, find a spot near a tall object and sit the same distance away from the object as the height of that object (e.g. sit 15m away from a 15m high tree or sit 20m away from a 20m high crag). This will take you far enough away from that object to avoid the lightning passing from it to you, but it will also give you protection as it is more likely to be hit than you are.
- Try to sit on a rucksack to insulate from lightning being conducted by the ground. Try to keep your feet off the ground.
- Try to keep your head tucked down so that your back is exposed not your head, so if you do get hit it is less likely to be as serious.