

Lupine Adventure Co-operative



Guide to Remote Supervision and Searches

2013 - 2020

4th Edition, Revision 1

Contents

1. Remote Supervision.....	3
1.1. What is remote supervision	3
1.2. Prerequisites of remote supervision.....	3
1.3. Contact with the group – Seen vs unseen.....	5
1.4. When to stay close.....	6
1.5. Techniques of supervision	7
1.6. Top tips for remote supervision.....	9
1.7. Kit in the supervisor’s bag.....	10
1.8. Debriefing the group.....	11
1.9. Using electronic trackers	12
2. Searches	16
2.1. Primary Searching Strategies	16
2.2. The Secondary Search	18
2.3. Calling Mountain Rescue	21
2.4. Advice to lost / injured groups	22

1. Remote Supervision

1.1. What is remote supervision

Supervising an expedition group means being responsible for the safety and welfare of its members during their expedition.

The term ‘remote supervision’ refers to a process of supervision where the supervisor remains out of sight and hearing of the team and does not intervene. Whilst it may be necessary to meet the group on occasion and perhaps to accompany them at specific points, this is kept to a minimum.

So, the challenge for the supervisor is to be responsible for the welfare and safety of the group, whilst remaining largely out of contact with them. The first part of this booklet aims to explain how this can best be done.



The responsibility of the supervisor applies equally to the time a group spends on a camp site as to the time they spent journeying. In this booklet though, we are mainly concerned with the time that the group spends journeying between campsites.

1.2. Prerequisites of remote supervision

Before releasing the young people under our care into the outdoors under remote supervision we need to make sure they have the skills, kit and information to deal with situations that they may encounter.

1.2.1. Training

These skills are best learnt in a variety of ways and settings including the classroom, outdoor demonstrations and practical experience.

Below are the areas that we train and assess our students in as a minimum before we sign them off for remote supervision.

Area of learning	How you could approach it
Navigation	We usually start off with classroom sessions, move into the outdoors with demonstrations and giving practical experience. Once we are confident in their abilities we would follow the group from a distance with regular eye contact before arranging to meet them some distance away.
Hazard awareness	Hazard awareness training can be started in the classroom, identifying theoretical hazards in different categories. You can then move onto identifying potential hazards on a route from a map. When out walking with a group, ask the participants to identify hazards from the map and then point them out when you arrive at them as well as discussing other unpredicted hazards on the way.
First aid	First aid can be trained in a classroom session. However, in good weather this can take place outdoors so as to take it one step closer to the real environment.
Emergency procedures	We go through our emergency procedures cards in training and often immediately before setting off on the expedition. We sometimes make time for a live roll play on the practice expedition with full kit.
Stove use	Practical training must be given. We recommend that our students do not plan to cook during the day (if it is raining it is likely they would skip that meal) but if they insist on it we say that they MUST only cook by a water source (a small stream or tap) that they could use in case they suffer a burn.
Country code	Classroom theory supplemented by good practice and discussion on accompanied walks.

Classroom lesson plans are available to download from our web site.

1.2.2. Other prerequisites

The participants must be properly equipped. It is often essential to conduct a physical kit check of essentials. Hats and gloves are an important and often forgotten bit of kit so it is a good idea to have a supply of spares (make a habit of picking up hats and odd gloves you find on the hillside for this purpose, they are, after all, just litter).

It is also essential for members of the group to have a means of contacting their supervisor in cases of emergency. We advise supervisors to write their phone number on all of the group's maps as the map is almost always to hand. Contact details are also included on route cards and emergency procedures reminder slips. These slips can be downloaded from our website.

1.3. Contact with the group - Seen vs unseen

"All meetings (with the team) represent an intrusion into the team's own expedition"

DofE Expedition Assessor Accreditation Scheme handbook

How much contact you should have with your group may depend upon a number of different factors. These may include:

- A minimum-contact level stipulated by your organisation
- The competence and maturity of the group
- The weather
- The terrain
- Potential hazards on, or close to, the route
- How well can you assess their wellbeing from a distance

Team morale and progress can be affected positively or negatively by your presence and intervention. As a rule, on sunny days in good weather it is good to avoid contact as much as possible. When the sun is shining



progress is often slow and any excuse to take packs off and sit down is usually taken. When the weather is not so great team morale can be boosted by a different friendly face appearing in the middle of nowhere in full waterproofs. On bad weather days meeting the group sitting in a car can have a negative effect on team morale (though not always).

Deciding not to make contact with a group is often the harder decision to make.

- 1) You may a bit bored after being stuck out on a hill for a few hours watching groups go by.
- 2) You may have to hide a car and view from a hillside by the road rather than just sit in your car where the footpath crosses the road.
- 3) You may be concerned that there may be a problem that you could help with but cannot detect by a visual assessment from a distance.

'If you want to stay hidden, they will not see you.'

It is usually desirable to play down the amount of unseen supervision that you are doing especially if the groups are not well known to you. Some individuals can get a bit 'weirded out' at the thought of you 'spying' on them. It is fine to let them know that they will not always see you (or their assessor if on a DofE assessment) but if you decide to closely monitor a group it is often advisable to not let on just how much visual contact you do have.

Generally groups are not looking out for you and it is surprising how closely you can supervise a group without being detected. Wearing muted colours and using binoculars to enable you to view from a distance will help you to remain undetected. However, being discovered 'hiding' is a bad position to be in. Once seen in this way groups may be very much on the look out for you, destroying their experience and making your life harder (as well as making you look a bit foolish).

1.4. When to stay close

Again how closely you supervise the group will depend on a number of different factors, the list is pretty much identical to those shown in section 1.3 *Contact with the group*.

However, we advise paying particular attention in the following areas:

1) Areas of navigational difficulty.

It is in your interest to cover these areas. If you lose a group it will cause you stress and more work while you go about finding them. If you have covered areas where they are likely to go wrong (especially if it is likely that they will not realise they have gone wrong) then the risk of losing a group is minimised.

2) Areas of immediate and / or serious danger.

These may include cliffs, road crossings, river crossings etc. Whether a potential hazard constitutes a serious danger will depend largely on the behaviour and ability of the group in question. Positioning yourself close to cliff edges or stepping stones so that you can gauge the attitude of



the approaching group is often advised. Obviously you have to be close enough to the danger to be able to intervene if necessary.

3) Remote areas.

Often, when remotely supervising a group, the best place for you is close by your vehicle and in phone signal to ensure you are mobile and have access to any kit you may need. However, if your group are in an area remote from roads then you may need to be in that area too so as to be able to respond more quickly should they need your help. It is important that you check your 'waiting up' location against their route to gauge your possible response time in the event of your help being required to assist with an injury. It is also advisable to watch your group and record the time as they enter remote areas and then back out again later in the day so that you know if they are in a remote area or not if you lose them.

1.5. Techniques of supervision

Please note that the following techniques and the terms used to name them are those used by Lupine Adventure, and while they are in wider

usage, are not necessarily used nor understood across the board. Checkpoints. A checkpoint is a point on their route where you plan to meet the group. Checkpoints should usually be somewhere that it is very unlikely they will miss should they for example take a wrong turning.

Observation Points. These are similar to checkpoints but refer to a specific point on the route where you observe the group without actually meeting them. Often this will be for a purpose in addition to establishing that the group are on route and at what time. For example, to make sure that they take the right turning or avoid a hazard. It may be necessary to be close enough that you can intervene if necessary.

Shadowing - this involves following a group without them being aware of your presence. It can be useful when you want to keep an eye on a group over a particular section of the route and the visibility is too poor for you see them from a greater distance.

Sweeping - walking a section of the route after the group or groups have travelled it. This is most likely to be done if you are working with another supervisor who is staffing a checkpoint ahead. By sweeping the route you will come across any groups who have had a problem on the route, and will also gain information about that section of the route which may be valuable if when you reach the checkpoint it transpires that a group has not arrived.

Staying ahead - You might find it useful to walk a section of the route ahead of the group, perhaps on your way to a staff a checkpoint. This will give you information about the route before the group travel it. By doing this you may be alerted to areas of navigational difficulty or hazards that need closer supervision.

Accompanied - You might chose to travel with the group at times. On a DofE practice expedition the group may well be accompanied for a day or more in order to assess their abilities, provide further training or conduct individual debriefs. On a assessed expedition you might accompany them for a short time near specific, serious hazards.

1.6. Top tips for remote supervision

1. Record all sightings.

This is so important and you'll be glad you did it if you lose a group. In the event of losing a group it is vital to know where and when you last saw them. If this isn't written down, and you don't have an exact fix then working out where they may be becomes extremely difficult and prone to errors. How you do it is up to you. Writing the time you saw a group on your map provides a record of sightings throughout the day. You may wish to do this as proof to your manager that you are on the case. Alternatively, reset a stopwatch every time you see your group.



2. Think about where to position yourself.

Whenever you place yourself, it is important to keep a few things in mind. Obviously your first concerns should be the three situations mentioned in section 1.4 *When to stay close*. Beyond this your first concern should be will they actually pass you where you are? If there is a risk that they may take a short cut and leave you standing for ages as they waltz on then make sure you cover the start or end of the possible shortcut instead. Your next concern should be how long will you be able to see them for? (Assuming you are going to remain hidden). Time other walkers passing your field of view and set a count down alarm for that period of time (the longer the better obviously). If you are reading a book or doing some paperwork have your alarm constantly counting down to remind you to look up periodically.

3. Accept that sometimes you just have to stay in your car.

On bronze and silver expeditions especially the geography often lends itself to car based remote supervision. Getting out and going for a walk is often counter productive if the road network crisscrosses their route.

4. Identify possible collaboration between supervisors.

If you are co-ordinating a large team with multiple supervisors then make sure that they know of days that they may be able to work together, checking each others groups through. Which brings me onto...

5. Work smart not hard.

Remote supervision of expeditions can be deceptively tiring. On paper it sounds easy, a bit of sitting in your car eating doughnuts, the odd walk. In reality it can be physically and mentally taxing. This combined with long days and sometimes poor nights sleep can really take it out of you. Identify when you can safely have some down time during the day to sit in a café or have a break.

1.7. Kit in the supervisor's bag

The participants are very well equipped so to a certain extent you don't have to be. As Mountain Leaders we are taught to usually carry a wide range of equipment when walking with a group. This is often not necessary when supervising expedition groups remotely as the participants will be incredibly well equipped with warm clothes, shelter, food, stoves, first aid kits etc. However, you too must be self sufficient and safe. How much you actually carry will depend on the location, the weather and the distance and expected duration of your excursion from the vehicle. Do consider that you may need to be away for longer and go further than you expect as events unfold. As a minimum I would include.

- Waterproofs
- Food and Drink
- First aid kit
- Torch
- Map and compass
- Route cards
- Phone and key phone numbers
- Binoculars (even a cheap pair is indispensable for group identification)
- Stopwatch (for recording sightings or personal navigation)

And optional extras include.

- Umbrella - Most waterproof systems work best when you are moving (generating heat). Having an umbrella will keep you drier when sitting still and you will be able to read a book under it. 'Stormshield' umbrellas with wind vents work well.
- Flask / Stove - Being able to make a hot drink is a good way of passing

the time as well as keeping warm. Jet boils (and Alpkit's Brukit) are excellent for DofE work as they are very fast at boiling water as well as cooling fast so they are quick and easy to pack away.

- Group shelter - either just a small one for you or possibly a larger one if you might want to gather the group together for some sort of briefing or ad hoc training session on the hillside in poor weather.
- Book - remember to relax when you can.

1.8. Debriefing the group

Lupine Adventure Co-op request that our staff give both individual and group feedback after expeditions. Whilst we leave it up to the individual supervisor to perform this how they see fit, we recommend the following protocol is followed.

Towards the end of the expedition find the group and walk with them for a period. Ask each member of the group to hang back and speak to them for a bit about their experience while walking along the route. When you are a couple of KM from the end stop the group and engage them in group feedback. By conducting the individual feedback first it starts them thinking about what they have been doing and makes the group feedback a more lively, participatory experience. Trying to conduct either group or individual feedback at the end point of the expedition is extremely difficult (if not impossible) to do well as the group will be distracted by any number of things like other groups, parents, returning of kit etc. Having said that on qualifying expeditions conducting a short, congratulatory group feedback session at the end is always nice.

If you can do a second debrief a few days after the expedition then this is advisable as the participants will have had a bit more time to reflect. It usually produces a much more positive experience for everyone as a bit more retrospective enjoyment (aka type 2 fun) kicks in.



1.9. Using electronic trackers

At Lupine we started off, like most outdoor education professionals, very much against using trackers for remote supervision. We'd not needed them before, they were just new and expensive kit that would probably detract from the young people's feelings of independence and achievement.

In 2016 we noticed a change in the way that people on DofE and outdoor education Facebook forums were referring to trackers. A few years before negative comments on posts about their use would out number positive comments by more than 10:1 and in just a couple of years positive comments were starting to outnumber the negative ones. It became apparent to us that with the reducing cost of the technology, being able to track groups and giving groups the ability to ask for help in remote situations was becoming the norm.

We found ourselves in the interesting position that we were considering the purchase and use of trackers even though we had not identified a need for them in our risk assessments. To put it another way we felt that while there is always an element of risk in remotely supervising groups in remote situations the risks are not high (if done well) and the presence of a tracker does not reduce them considerably (and could even increase the likelihood of some incidents). However, society (parents, schools, youth groups) were beginning to expect that we would be offering this facility.

Our main problems with trackers are;

1) When we are supervising a group they know that we are in the area but they generally really do not realise just how closely we are supervising them. By giving them a tracker it might totally destroy that feeling of independence.

2) There is no doubt that having a tracker on a group can change the way that you supervise that group and we are concerned that having tracked groups will have a negative effect on the quality of our supervision.

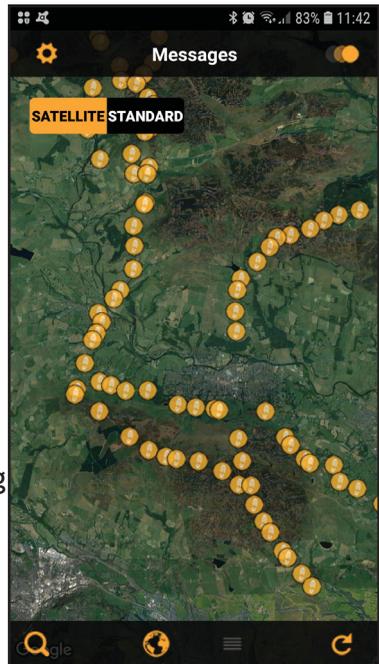
3) The supervisor usually needs internet access to receive updates.

4) They are not anything like 100% reliable and there is a danger that a group in trouble may just press a button to ask for help then sit back only to discover hours later that the message didn't send through user error

or a problem with the technology. User error by both staff and students is surprisingly high with Spot trackers. We give a written briefing sheet to all staff to ensure the students know how to use it properly (see Appendix A at the back of this document).

But on the other hand...

1) If your group have a tracker then you can supervise much more efficiently. For instance, you may be planning to observe a group on a hill top to ensure they go the right way (and if necessary stop them heading into the wrong valley). With the use of a tracker you can time your ascent of the hill better thus using your time more efficiently (work smart not hard; remember) and you will also not have the stress of worrying if they have already passed through.



2) Finding a group that you have lost can take up a lot of time and fuel (possibly of quite a few members of staff). With a working tracker this will be reduced.

3) If a group are off route and injured then you will find them a lot quicker with a tracker thus saving you, them, their parents and mountain rescue a lot of time and worry.

4) With a tracker and help button you are in a much better position to insist on a stricter mobile phone policy.

5) You may be able to supervise in a more hands off way, allowing groups to go wrong for a bit longer. There is also the possibility of telling groups that they can go off route on ad hoc exploration if they wish by sending an OK message when doing so to let us know where they are and that they know they are not following the plan but everything is fine.

6) You can use the tracker trace in reviewing the route with the group to discuss where they went wrong and why. It can also help you to get a

picture over time of where the trouble spots are where groups go wrong.

1.9.1. Keeping supervision standards high when using trackers

At the time of writing we have been using trackers with DofE groups for 3 years. We don't track every group by a long way and we have a mix of GSM and satellite trackers. We mainly use GSM trackers but have some satellite trackers that we use on international trips and with groups where a participant has a more serious medical issue as the helping hand button may be used to summon help quicker.



We have found that in order to keep supervision standards high it is necessary to work out your supervision plan as if you don't have a tracker then only use the tracker to help you time your movements more accurately. This is **absolutely essential** and cannot be stressed enough and does require a degree of discipline from supervisors. Both our GSM and Spot trackers drop off the radar surprisingly frequently either through loss of signal, the unit needing a reboot, batteries running out or just delays in the system. They **cannot** be relied upon. If you have worked out your supervision plan as if you didn't have them then it is easy to revert to the more traditional way of doing things.

1.9.2. Top tips for supervisors using trackers

- 1) Work out your supervision plan as if you don't have trackers (there it is again, I said it is important).
- 2) Still record all sightings on your map as you normally would.
- 3) Still observe groups in all the places that you would without trackers.
- 4) See if your home internet or mobile phone contract lets you attach to other hot spots via your mobile (BT openzone is everywhere in the countryside for example).
- 5) Try to sometimes supervise groups without trackers to keep your traditional skills honed.
- 6) Practice using the trackers whenever possible until you are familiar with their limitations.
- 7) Have someone at your base to text or call for an update on the tracker location in case you don't have enough signal for the app to refresh.

1.9.3. Mobile phone (GSM) based trackers

At Lupine we have a number of GSM trackers from Beyond Marathon. You have to set up an event online and then the assign a tracker to each group. You then see a marker where each group are. The coverage is good as they have an any-network sim in them.

Positives	Negatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approximately £120 per unit and £10 a month when in use and £1 a month when not in use• OS Mapping included• Updates every 90 seconds will give you 5 or 6 days on a full charge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It will only work when there is mobile network coverage, though it will start working automatically once in signal.• Just one button (assistance requested)

1.9.4. SPOT Satellite trackers

You have to buy the handset and then pay a subscription fee to use the service. The handsets not only track but have 4 buttons that you can programme to email or text different addresses and phone numbers with different messages. The buttons are; Check in, Custom message, Helping hand and SOS (texts the emergency services and the supervisor).

Positives	Negatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses satellite communication so it not reliant on the group being in mobile phone signal• Track / Check in / Custom message / Helping hand / SOS functions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expensive subscription (currently €190 per unit per year• Location updates every 5 minutes as standard (can be reduced to 2.5 minutes for an extra cost).• Tracking messages often get held up somewhere in the system meaning you get none for 45 minutes then lots at once.• Does not us OS grid references or OS maps as standard (but you can pay for this via companies such as Mapyx.)

You can type latitude and longitude straight into Google maps or the OS mapping app (separated by a comma). You can also download apps or visit websites (<http://bit.ly/OS-grid>) for conversion to grid references.

2. Searches

*1st rule of remote supervision
They are always further back than you think*

This section covers how to find a group (through different search techniques) when they do not appear at a specific place when you were expecting them, i.e. You think that they are lost!

There may be several reasons for this - including

- The group underestimating or overestimating the time taken to cover that particular leg.
- A navigational error causing a delay or resulting in the group taking a different route altogether.
- One or more of the group suffering an injury or medical condition.

The way you deal with an overdue group may depend on several factors including:

- Daylight hours available.
- Nature / competency of the group.
- Medical conditions within the group.
- Point last seen.
- Morale of the group
- Terrain and potential dangers

As a leader you must decide when you can deal with the situation by yourself and your peers or when you need to call Mountain Rescue to escalate the search efforts.

In this section we will look at two types of searches, primary and secondary. It should be noted that these searches are 'amateurish' compared to that of a full scale major mountain rescue type search - however they are appropriate for the situations that you may find yourself in and can provide a good indication of how lost the group really are!

2.1. Primary Searching Strategies

2.1.1. Review the route

The first thing to do is to review the route very carefully asking the following questions.

- How competent is the group?
- Where and when did you last see them?
- What likely navigational errors may they have made?
- Might they have slipped past before you arrived at a point or by taking a detour?
- Are there any specific previously unidentified dangers on the route?
- What escape routes may they have taken if they did have a problem?
- Do they have a mobile phone and will they have phone signal? Can you text them requesting a grid reference?

Depending on the answers to the questions listed above you may decide to do some of the following.

- Inform other members of staff out from your organisation to keep an eye out for them.
- Phone or go to the campsite and ask them to inform you if the group arrive.
- Drive around the surrounding roads looking for them.
- Walk part of the route (this is often the most common strategy).

2.1.2. Walking the route (usually in reverse)

Firstly, work out the furthest possible point that they could have got to based on your knowledge of the group and when you last saw them. This is your start point. Walk the route in reverse paying particular attention to the reverse view at junctions, looking for points of possible navigational error. At each junction ask yourself, ‘If I arrived at this junction how likely is it that I would go the wrong way?’ After reaching the group’s last known point re-trace your steps checking out the most likely navigational error that you have just identified on their route.

Be aware that other walkers are often very keen to help and asking them can assist you in your task. Such information is, however, often very unreliable. It is very easy for a well meaning walker to report a sighting of your group when in fact it was a different group altogether, or to report that there are no groups on your route when in fact they have been on a different path without knowing it. We would recommend only taking positive sightings into account and treating them with caution. The more unusual or distinctive your group is the more likely it is that a casual walker will be able to make an identification.

If this search fails to find the group you may have to escalate the search into a secondary search. If at any time you are concerned for the welfare of the group or their safety (e.g. They may have strayed into a hazardous area or darkness is approaching) you should not hesitate to ring 999, ask for police and then Mountain Rescue.

2.2. The Secondary Search

This is a beefed up version of a primary search using other leaders available to search a larger area for the group. Whether you deploy this technique or call Mountain Rescue depends on numerous factors most likely, hours of remaining daylight, time that the group was last seen and whether you are worried about the welfare or the groups safety - e.g. If one of the group has a medical condition.

With the secondary search it is best to not wait too long to muster your staff as it may take a number of hours to gather resources to your location. Other members of staff will have to ensure that their groups are safe before coming to your aid.

2.2.1. Overall plan

Firstly, it is important that you have one member of staff in charge to ensure that there is not a duplication of effort and so a smooth handover to Mountain Rescue can occur if necessary. Often it is best to co-ordinate your search from the end point of the lost group's route. In this way every member of staff reporting in is effectively checking parts of the route every time they go out or report back. Also, if the group turn up then this is the most likely place that they will turn up at. If the group is missing a long distance from their destination then it may be possible to conduct the search from an 'intermediate search co-ordination point'. This should be a point that; A) you are confident they have not already passed, and B) you are confident that they will not miss by being off route accidentally or otherwise (Bridges provide good pinch points for intermediate search co-ordination points).

- The first thing to do is review the route as described in section 2.1.1 *Review the route.*
- Mark up a map with all important information, i.e. Times and locations of when the group was last seen, identify areas / paths to be searched and prioritise them, mark area's once they have been searched with the time, searcher and how confident they are that they have not

missed the group (if the areas searched is a good path over fields it may be 100% sure if it is dense woodland with a vague path it would be much lower).

- Write a log. Include past contact, present action and future escalations (with times). It is important to decide when to inform the emergency services before that time arrives and make a note to ensure that you do so.
- Don't forget to listen to your instincts or, if you don't know the group too well, then ask staff who know the group better what their gut feeling is.

2.2.2. Other Considerations

- If there is no mobile phone coverage at your search co-ordination point consider setting up a communications hub somewhere in signal and get access to the campsite land line or phone box.
- Make sure that staff have access to food and water, they will have been working all day
- Establish a clear chain of command. A prompt briefing of staff as they arrive will prevent an information vacuum which staff will fill with theories made with only part of the information. Brief first, ask for questions at the end.

2.2.3. Managing your staff

Different staff will arrive at different times and will bring with them different skills and equipment. Make sure you know roughly who will be turning up when. Different roles to be filled could include drivers, runners, cyclists, navigators, communications hub, shoppers.

The first competent navigator that arrives should usually be sent out to retrace the route as this is the most likely place that they will be found.

Regularly update everyone, set up a WhatsApp group (preferred) or SMS text list so that everyone has all relevant information at the same time.

Ensure staff are properly equipped and skilled for the tasks that you are requesting them to carry out.

All staff will need

- Personal kit (prepared for darkness, long waits etc).
- A clear group description.

- A clear brief of where to go, what to do when there and when to report in.
- Contact information for the search co-ordinator and / or the communication hub.
- Food / water.

2.2.4. If you have phone contact with your group

You can help the group to locate themselves by asking the group the following questions:

- 1) When and where were you when you last knew where you were?
- 2) What have you done since?
- 3) What can you see that you could get to in a minute, 5 minutes and in the distance?
- 4) Can you see ... (specific landmarks) Take a bearing on it, how far away is it?
- 5) Which direction is up-hill (what is the aspect of slope in technical terms).

If none of that works then you may be able to use technology to find them. Most groups will have smartphones with them. There are a great many apps on modern mobile phones that students can use to locate themselves or to relay their location to their supervisor. If your team are hopelessly lost then they can retrieve their phone from the sealed envelope, switch it on, and use one of the following.

OS Locate: If a team member has the free OS locate app on their phone then they can get a grid reference from it in an emergency even with no signal, if they have a bit of signal they can text their location to you from within the app.

iphones: iphones have a compass app built in that shows latitude and longitude. You can type latitude and longitude straight into Google maps or OS mapping apps (separated by a comma).

Android: Open Google maps, touch and hold where you are (shown by a blue dot). Latitude and Longitude are displayed in the search box.

WhatsApp: If your team are lost but have a bit of internet signal then you can send them a WhatsApp message telling them how to share their location with you from within the WhatsApp app (you use the + on

Apple phones and the paperclip on Android). You might want to consider showing them how to do this in training.

SARLoc for DofE: This is the system that many Mountain Rescue services use (SARLoc stands for Search and Rescue Locate). If you are in telephone communication with a lost group then you can text them a link that they click which will then give them their grid reference and allow you to see their location on a map via another link. The advantage of this is that it requires no prior organisation with the team or downloads and requires very little data. You will have to register in advance though through the SARLoc for DofE Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/sarlocDofE/>

Websites: There are a number of websites such as www.whereamirightnow.com with easy instructions on how to share your current location.

2.2.5. Finding the group

When the group is found it is important to ensure that all staff are notified as soon as possible. All staff must acknowledge that they know that the search is off and confirm when they are safely off the hillside if you are not all going to a single point at the end of the day.

Upon finding the group it is good if all members of staff except the group's supervisor can melt away so as not to immediately let on that concerns were raised. The supervisor can investigate what went wrong and whether any further action or training is needed.

2.3. Calling Mountain Rescue

If you are worried about the welfare or safety of a group then you should have no apprehensions about calling the local Mountain Rescue team. They know their area well and have extra resources in the form of staff, search dogs, access to helicopters with thermal imaging cameras and technology to triangulate positions to increase the likelihood of finding lost groups quickly. It is also better to inform a Mountain Rescue team that you need their assistance a few hours before darkness as it is much easier to search in the light than in the dark. Please note that it can take up to an hour (if not longer) for a rescue team to get fully dispatched and start actively searching.

If you have to upgrade a search from a primary to a secondary you may

want to give the local Mountain Rescue team the ‘heads up’. But you will need to stress that you may need their assistance in a few hours time but do not need their help at present. This can be extremely useful for a Mountain Rescue team as they can let members know about a potential call out and start looking at search dog availability and a possible plan of action - local Mountain Rescue teams tend to know ‘lost spots’ for DofE groups in their patch!

If you are worried and decide to call for Mountain Rescue you need to call 999 and ask for the police and then Mountain Rescue. It may help to know which mountain rescue team’s area you are operating in.

Once you have called on the services of a Mountain Rescue team, you will normally find that the team’s team leader will ring you and ask for details of the nature of the call out - i.e. Description of the group (size, colour of clothing and packs), point last seen, where they were heading, experience of the group (bronze, silver, gold etc). The supervisor may also be asked to head down to the rescue base to aid in the search. In this situation it is important to know exactly what paths have been searched.

Calls to Mountain Rescue and other staff in a search can really drain your phone battery life (which may already be low if you haven’t been able to plug it into the mains for a few days). It is advised that you carry a power pack or a spare, cheap, Nokia 100 style mobile phone and save your smartphone battery life.

2.3.1. Texting Mountain Rescue

It is possible to send text messages to 999 but to do so you need to register your phone. To do this simply text the word ‘register’ to 999 and follow the instructions that get sent back to you. **DO IT NOW**. Having the ability to text the police has the advantage that accurate messages can be relayed in areas of poor signal

2.4. Advice to lost / injured groups

As a supervisor it is important to brief your group what to do if they get ‘lost’ or have a medical emergency.

If a group get lost they should, in the first instance, try to call and text their supervisor at the earliest opportunity so that the supervisor can help locate them and put them back on track.

If phone signal is not available or their phone is not working then a group should at the very least try (if not already) and get on to an obvious footpath (or even better to a path junction), as this will most likely be searched by mountain rescue or supervisors first and will increase the likelihood of being found more quickly.

If the group is on a footpath with no mobile phone reception efforts should be made to stay on it and get off the hill to find a land line (in a farmhouse or village) to call the supervisor.

Appendix A: Spot device briefing for staff

Spot device briefing for staff to give to students

- 1) Give the device to someone responsible.
- 2) Get them to switch it on and activate the tracking, check that it has worked properly with the on light and the tracking light flashing together.
- 3) Tell them that... 'when you are walking you must place the device in the top pocket of your rucksack not near a phone with the logo pointing at the sky.
- 4) If you want to let me know where you are and that you are OK (if you have missed a bit of route or are behind time for example) then press and hold the OK button until the light by the button flashes with the power and tracker button. It will stop flashing after 20 minutes.
- 5) Try pressing the OK button NOW.
- 6) If you want me to come and find you then lift the flap and press the helping hand button until the light flashes.
- 7) If you want the emergency services then lift the flap and press the SOS button until the light flashes.

DO NOT SWITCH IT OFF DURING THE EXPEDITION

Additional information for supervisors about Spot devices

- 1) If they press the helping hand button then it will continue to send messages every 5 minutes until you get there and deactivate it. Do not tell them this as we don't want them to deactivate it in case they do so too soon.
- 2) If they press the helping hand button then you will need to check that the tracking light is still flashing before sending them off again. You may need to press the tracker button again.
- 3) On the first night consider asking them to send an OK message to check that they still remember how.
- 4) If you are unsure of battery status, Check that the power button isn't flashing red as this means that the batteries are low.



3 things to know about DofE Expeditions with Lupine Adventure Co-op

1

Lupine Adventure Co-op is a not-for-profit company, all proceeds go on running the co-op. There are no owners or shareholders to pay profits to.

2

Our goal is to enable you to offer high quality expeditions to all who want them. We are able to work creatively to make that happen.

3

All practices and work in remote terrain is staffed with one instructor per group. Groups therefore get the attention they need to succeed in safety.



www.lupineadventure.co.uk
lupine@lupineadventure.co.uk
0113 410 3712

