



Press Release

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For immediate release

Plotting a route back to the hills

Mountaineering organisations working together towards a return to hill walking and climbing in Scotland

As we approach the end of week seven of lockdown, mountaineering organisations in Scotland are asking the hill walking and climbing community to 'hold the line' and to avoid travel and stay local for their daily exercise in accordance with the current Scottish Government COVID-19 guidance.

Despite an easing of restrictions in England this week, the advice for people in Scotland remains the same – stay home and only go out for essential work, food or health reasons – although people in Scotland may now go outside to exercise twice daily.

Walkers and climbers are keen to get back out to the hills and crags, and Mountaineering Scotland – the organisation representing hill walkers, climbers and ski tourers in Scotland – is leading discussions with partners in the Mountain Safety Group on how to deliver a phased return to the hills and mountains.

This group of key mountain safety organisations, including Scottish Mountain Rescue, Police Scotland, Mountain Training Scotland, Glenmore Lodge and the Association of Mountaineering Instructors, has developed proposals this week which are being submitted to the Scottish Government outlining how mountaineering activities such as hill walking, climbing and bouldering can be re-introduced.

Damon Powell, chair of Scottish Mountain Rescue said: "It is good to be working as part of the Mountain Safety Group, to ensure we can get people back out into the outdoors undertaking their preferred activities as soon as there is a safe and responsible way to do so within the Scottish Government guidelines. We hope to see everyone out there soon, but preferably not on a rescue!"

George McEwan the Chief Officer of Mountain Training Scotland added: "Prior to lockdown, our leaders, instructors, coaches and guides supported active public participation (both voluntarily and professionally) in walking, climbing and mountaineering, which does so much to support improved health and well-being. As we look forward to reactivation, we are supporting the work of Mountaineering Scotland and the rest of the Mountain Safety Group, to facilitate a phased return to the outdoors which is both safe and socially responsible."

Mountaineering Scotland has also taken on board feedback from its members and discussions with organisations across the Scottish outdoor sector, including sportscotland, outdoor sport governing bodies and the national parks, so that everyone can enjoy Scotland's outdoors in a way that

considers the safety of individuals as well as rural communities. Further work is ongoing to produce a position statement and more detailed supporting guidance.

“These are unprecedented times” said Stuart Younie, CEO of Mountaineering Scotland “and I’d like to thank Mountaineering Scotland members for keeping to the current guidelines. We know it’s been a challenge but it’s great to see the mountaineering community pulling together in this way. We want to see an immediate return to hill walking, climbing and other outdoor activities as lockdown starts to ease, and have been encouraged by the way the outdoor sector in Scotland is working together to make this happen in a safe and responsible way.”

Ends

Notes for editors:

Image: Schiehallion from Farragon hill, credit [Richard Cross photography](#)
http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/RichardX_Farragon.jpg

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About Mountaineering Scotland:

- Mountaineering Scotland is the national representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers and ski-tourers in Scotland.
- Mountaineering Scotland provides skills training and information to mountain users to promote safety, self-reliance and the enjoyment of our mountain environment.
- The Mountaineering Scotland is a membership organisation with over 14,500 members and is funded through a combination of membership subscriptions, non-governmental grants and investment from sportscotland, which supports public initiatives and services in mountain safety, mountain training and the development and promotion of mountaineering activities.
- Mountaineering Scotland also acts for 75,000 members of the BMC or British Mountaineering Council on matters related to Landscape and Access in Scotland.
- Mountaineering Scotland landscape and access work is supported financially by the Scottish Mountaineering Trust and the BMC
- Mountaineering Scotland also runs the ClimbScotland initiative to encourage young people to participate in climbing and support their progression.
- Mountaineering Scotland is the national governing body for sport climbing. It offers pathways to climbing coaching, organises and promotes a range of regional and national climbing competitions, and manages the Scottish climbing and bouldering teams. It contributes to the management of the GB teams with the ultimate aim of seeing a Scottish athlete achieve a podium position in the Olympic Games.

- The MCoFS is a not for profit company limited by guarantee and incorporated in Scotland. Company number SC322717.
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