



Press Release

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For immediate release

A first step for walkers and climbers

Mountaineering Scotland welcomes move to Phase 1

Mountaineering Scotland has welcomed the move to Phase 1 in the progress towards the easing of lockdown restrictions and the inclusion of hillwalking and limited climbing activity in Phase 1 – as a small first step.

It has emphasised to members and other walkers and climbers that phase one is more of an extension to the daily exercise guidelines than a restarting of sport and recreational activity.

With a key factor in the Scottish Government's advice remaining that people should not drive any more than five miles to take their exercise, most people in cities and in the Central Belt will still be unable to access the hills and crags.

Mountaineering Scotland has published detailed guidelines so that people can be aware of how the Government's guidelines affect them and so that those who are within reach of hills and crags are aware of additional considerations they must keep in mind – and that many car parks and other facilities remain closed and unable to accommodate walkers and climbers.

Stuart Younie, Chief Executive Officer of Mountaineering Scotland, said: "While welcoming this step forward, it must be stressed that an easing of lockdown does not mean a return to normal, and we urge everyone heading out to enjoy the outdoors to be mindful of how their individual actions reflect on the whole outdoor community.

"The key will be for individuals to take a sensible approach to their activities, use your judgement to manage the risks, and to consider the social responsibility we all have to each other, to protecting our emergency services and to minimise the transmission of COVID -19."

For this stage, walkers and climbers are reminded to stay local and follow the current public health guidance for Scotland to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

They should remember that many car parks, toilets and other facilities will remain closed, which may affect any plans.

They should plan ahead and stay well within their limits - whatever their activity - to avoid the need for rescue and involvement of the emergency services.

And they should be responsible and follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code at all times.

Mr Younie added: “We are aware that many will feel frustrated that they are still not able to access the hills and crags they love, but it is the first step on a journey that, if we all do our part to keep it on course, will see wider access returning more quickly. At Phase 1 the Government has recognised the benefits hillwalking, climbing, and access to the outdoors, have on our physical and mental health, and we will continue to press for as rapid a return to the hills for all as is safe and responsible in this pandemic.”

Mountaineering Scotland’s guidelines can be found at www.mountaineering.scot/coronavirus

Ends

Notes for editors:

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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 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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