



Press Release

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For immediate release

Weather warning for mountaineers

Severe weather in the mountains to continue into next week

Severe weather conditions over Scotland's mountains look set to continue through the weekend and into next week, and great care will need to be taken by anyone accessing the hills.

Mountain bikers have also been warned of potentially dangerous conditions in forests, for weeks to come.

Experts have stressed the importance of being properly equipped for full winter conditions in the mountains and of planning routes according to the weather and avalanche forecasts before any trip.

Specialist mountain weather forecasts are predicting sustained periods of gales or even hurricane-force winds on higher terrain for the next week. Snow, rain and hail will be experienced most days, often heavy and sometimes snowing to low levels and drifting significantly in the mountains.

Mountaineering Scotland's Mountain Safety Advisor Ben Gibson said: "With such extreme weather being forecast it's important to plan your journeys around conditions rather than just going for long-held ambitions.

"Check the specialist mountain forecasts and what the Scottish Avalanche Information Service says, and take an honest look at your fitness and skill levels – and those of the others in your party – and consider whether your planned route is really attainable or whether you should adapt it or make different plans altogether."

Vice Chair of Scottish Mountain Rescue, Kev Mitchell, said: "The weekend forecast is for very unsettled and, at times, dangerous conditions. With the arrival of Storm Eunice on Friday, hills will

see high winds and the potential for snowfall to low levels meaning the avalanche forecast will be likely to worsen.

“Good decision making is key in these situations and often the decision not to go, whilst correct, is the hardest one to make.

“We’d also signpost to the ThinkWINTER campaign which offers an excellent advice to help hill goers avoid needing help in the first place.

“Often, though, people don’t know what to do if they find themselves in difficulty. Please remember if you are lost, in need of assistance or in an emergency, dial 999 ask for Police then Mountain Rescue.”

Shaun Roberts, Principal of Glenmore Lodge said: “Be avalanche aware. Take time to read the sportscotland’s Avalanche Information Services’ avalanche hazards forecasts and blog pages. Maybe whilst sheltering from the weather at home, make a cup of tea and sign up for the free SAFOS e-learning be avalanche aware programme.”

Skiers are happy to see snow, which has been in short supply this winter, but Snowsport Scotland reminds ski tourers to pay attention to the conditions.

Euan Baxter, of Snowsport Scotland, said: “It’s always exciting to see the snow come in and get ready for seeking turns outside of resorts but, during the storm cycles which bring the snow, anyone seeking turns should slow down and give the conditions real thought. Who are you with? Where are you going? What is the weather doing? Is there an avalanche risk? Does everyone support your plan? Asking questions to yourself and your group will help inform the right decisions for a safe day in the hills.”

Storm damage to forests also brings added risk for mountain bikers.

Colena Cotter, of Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland, said: “Trail/Singletrack riding in many areas across Scotland continues to be exceptionally fragile following the devastation caused by Storm Arwen and the subsequent storms. Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS), land managers and trails associations are continuing their recovery efforts. In this exceptional set of circumstances, there continues to be a significant danger to life in some forests.

“We are working closely with FLS, land managers and trails associations to be able to share as much information as possible to ensure that riders can make the best choices and establish where they can ride safely. We have created a webpage with information riders can use when planning where to ride. We are urging riders to adhere to any trails/forests closed signage and keep checking our webpage and trail managers websites for updates.”

The DMBinS Storm webpage can be accessed at <https://dmbins.com/blog/storm-trail-update/>

Advice for hillwalkers and mountaineers can be accessed through Mountaineering Scotland at www.mountaineering.scot/thinkwinter

The SAFOS e-learning programme can be accessed at <https://be-avalanche-aware.teachable.com/p/be-avalanche-aware>

Ends

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