



Press Release

12 June 2017

For immediate release

Are you in the firing line?

Mountaineers urged to use judgment on or below mountain crags

Events last weekend in Coire an t-Sneachda in the Northern Corries of the Cairngorms have highlighted the need for all hill-walkers and climbers to be vigilant when climbing on or passing below mountain crags.

Two separate teams over the weekend were injured by rock fall. On Saturday a team on a route known as Fingers Ridge had a very lucky escape when a large slab of rock gave way. Ironically they were clearing loose rock from the route when the accident happened.

And on Sunday a team were injured on Pygmy Ridge, in the same Corrie.

Walkers and climbers are familiar with the shattered, loose rock around the crags and corries of Scottish Mountains. The process of freezing and thawing through the winter season continues to dislodge and shatter rock faces, and natural erosion processes continue as they have since the mountains were created.

Shaun Roberts, Principal at Glenmore Lodge, said: "I do believe that the nature of winters over the last decade, along with the generally more intense precipitation has had an impact on Coire an t-Sneachda.

"We have experienced a number of winters with very deep snow packs, including snow laying at depth on the steep broken ground of the Coire. Over a season and under the influence of gravity this snowpack will displace, but often not dislodge, blocks and boulders of significant size, leaving behind a significant challenge for the summer climber.

"And this year we enjoyed a super dry May but then received almost our monthly quota of rainfall on one day in June.

"I suspect these weather patterns are having an impact on the stability of some areas and we continue to approach climbing in Coire an t-Sneachda with a more heightened sense of the objective dangers."

Heather Morning, Mountain Safety Advisor with Mountaineering Scotland said: "Hillwalkers, scramblers and climbers should be extra vigilant when journeying either below or approaching scrambles and climbs - particularly if there are other parties above or there has been heavy rainfall in the previous few days.

"Specifically, hillwalkers should be particularly cautious when ascending or descending the Goat Track in Coire an t-Sneachda when there are climbers above them."

Ends

Notes for editors:

Image: <http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/clouds-above-coire-antsneachda.jpg>

A general image of Coire an-t Sneachda. Fingers Ridge is in profile in the centre of the photo and Pygmy Ridge can be seen profiled to its left.

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About Mountaineering Scotland:

- Mountaineering Scotland is the only recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers and ski-tourers who live in Scotland or who enjoy Scotland's mountains.
- 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 14,000 members representing hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers, 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 has launched the ClimbScotland initiative to encourage young people to participate in climbing and support their progression. It offers a dedicated website and a development team, which will introduce young people to climbing at schools, climbing walls and via youth organisations with a range of activities and events, while developing kids clubs and providing specialist support to parents, volunteers and teachers.
- Mountaineering Scotland is the national governing body for sports 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.
- Mountaineering Scotland is the new name for the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCofS), which acts to represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering.
- Mountaineering Council of Scotland remains the registered company name.

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