



Guidance for clubs and groups during COVID-19

Updated: 6 January 2021

INTRODUCTION

The continued presence of COVID-19 and the new variant of the virus means that we need to take extra care with our preparations and how we conduct ourselves while hill walking, climbing and getting to and from walks/climbs. The purpose of this guidance is to provide a framework for hill walkers and climbers in Scotland to be used alongside the current Scottish Government public health advice, highlighting additional considerations to be aware of in the presence of COVID-19 when taking part in these activities.

LOCAL PROTECTION LEVELS IN SCOTLAND

Clubs and participants should be aware of their local area protection level and associated restrictions for travel and groups sizes and consider this when planning outdoor activity. A [post code checker](#) is available to find out which level your local authority area is in.

- [Local protection levels by area](#) (Scottish Government website)

Broad guidance for sporting activity which should be followed within each level is set out in Table A below.

Note: For the purposes of the latest guidance all forms of walking and climbing are classed as non-contact sporting activity (except in an emergency)

IMPORTANT: Do not leave your home to undertake exercise or physical activity if Scottish Government advice means you should stay at home because you or someone you live with has or has had symptoms of COVID-19.

Please note: Public health advice and guidance for Scotland may differ from that of England and Wales (information for England and Wales is available on the [BMC website](#)).

Information on Scottish Government approach to managing COVID -19 is available at [Scottish Government: Coronavirus in Scotland](#).

We urge everyone heading out to enjoy the outdoors to be mindful of how their individual actions reflect on the whole outdoor community and to be aware of the concerns that rural and remote communities may have about the risk of transmission from areas where the virus is more prevalent. We ask 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.

PLANNING CLUB ACTIVITIES

For activity-specific information, please refer to the general guidance for hill walking and climbing in Scotland when planning your club activities – find the latest version here:

www.mountaineering.scot/coronavirus

- **Be mindful of how others may feel about group activities** – not everyone may wish to participate or feel comfortable being around larger groups.
- **Plans may need to change at short notice**, so consider whether it is wise to plan too far in advance.
- **Consider the level of activities being organised** and whether they are suitable for participants' level of experience and competence.
- **ThinkWINTER!** Additional winter specific safety advice is being provided by Mountaineering Scotland and its partner organisations, and can be accessed on our [website here](#)
- **Travel and transport**
 - Travel guidance provided by the Scottish Government should always be followed. Further information on what travel is permitted is available at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on travel and transport](#). Information for each local authority area, including their level is available at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): local protection levels](#) including a post code checker.
 - Please note that 'organised' club outdoor activities in level 3 areas should not take place outside your local authority area.
 - No 'organised' club activities are permitted in level 4 areas.
 - You should not travel into tier 3 or 4 areas if you are coming from a tier 0,1 or 2 area. Travel through tier 3 and 4 is allowed as long as your journey starts and ends outside them in a tier 0,1 or 2 area.
 - If clubs are booking commercial buses/coaches or use an adventure tourism company, this falls under the guidance from Transport Scotland.
- **Car sharing** - Specific information on car sharing is available from [Transport Scotland: advice on how to travel safely](#).

CLUB/GROUP ACTIVITIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- It is the responsibility of each club committee, sports facility operator and/or deliverer (herein referred to as the operator) to appoint a responsible person/s, referred to as the [COVID officer](#), to act as the point of contact on all things related to COVID-19. An [e-learning module for COVID officers](#) is available to support those undertaking the role.

- The COVID officer(s) **must** ensure that full risk assessments, processes and mitigating actions are in place before any sport or leisure activity takes place. Specific consideration should be given to the needs of those who are at greater risk including some older adults or those with disabilities.
- Clubs are advised to publish an action plan detailing their plans to carry out activities safely.
- Clubs should communicate clearly and regularly with members and participants setting out what they are doing to manage risk, measures that are in place and guidelines participants are asked to follow before, during and after visits to the venue/activity.
- **Test and Protect** measures should be implemented for all activities to assist NHS Scotland with contact tracing in the event of a virus outbreak. Contact details must be collected and retained for 21 days for each group lead/organised walk and consideration should be given to the particular risks to older members and those who are in more vulnerable groups.
- Think about how you would manage a situation where someone in your club or group is non-compliant with physical distancing or other measures in place.
- Members should be responsible for bringing their own food, drink and equipment and avoid sharing equipment where possible.
- Ensure that any equipment used is cleaned or quarantined after use (see further resources).
- Think about how you would administer first aid if required – see [HSE website](#) and [St John Ambulance](#) for advice on first aid during COVID-19.
- Those who were shielding can follow the same guidance as the rest of Scotland. To stay safe, they should strictly follow physical distancing and hygiene measures. More details on the [Scottish Government website](#).

INFORMAL CLUB ACTIVITY:

- For club members wishing to meet each other in an informal way outdoors (i.e. not as a club meet), general household rules should be followed according to the local measures level in place in their area – check this on the [Scottish Government website](#).
- Where separate households are participating, 2m physical distancing should always be maintained.
- **In level 3 areas**, you may meet with up to 6 people from a maximum of 2 households outdoors for informal exercise. Children under 12 do not count towards the total number of people counted in a gathering.
- **In level 4 areas** you can only meet with one other person from one household outdoors for informal sport or exercise. Children under 12 do not count towards the total number of people counted in a gathering.
- **In level 3 and 4 areas**, you can travel within your local area, or within 5 miles of the boundary of your local authority area, for informal outdoor recreation, as long as you start and finish at the same place,

and abide by the rules on meeting other households. We are being encouraged to travel no further than is needed to reach to a safe, non-crowded place to exercise in a socially distanced way.

- **Test and Protect** measures should be implemented for all activities to assist NHS Scotland with contact tracing in the event of a virus outbreak.

ORGANISED CLUB ACTIVITY:

- In level 0, 1, 2 and 3 areas, clubs and groups can hold organised activities for up to 30 people (adults and children) from any number of households with 2m physical distancing at all times, however we would advise keeping groups small around 6 – 8 people to ensure they are easier to manage.
- Travel for outdoor recreation is allowed at all levels, however organised activities at **levels 3 must remain within the local authority area** (see Planning club activities>Travel and transport above).
- **No 'organised' club activities are permitted in level 4 areas.**
- **Test and Protect** measures should be implemented for all activities to assist NHS Scotland with contact tracing in the event of a virus outbreak.
- Participants should only travel with members of their own, or extended, household, except in an emergency, and parking is a consideration if you are planning larger organised meets (see travel and transport guidance above).

SOCIAL MEETS

- If arranging social meets, clubs should follow the latest Scottish Government public health guidelines [on the Scottish Government website](#).

INSURANCE

- At this stage, there is no COVID exclusion under the Mountaineering Scotland liability insurance policy, however there is a duty of care owed to members and the public to ensure they are safe, and this means continuing to adhere to all governments guidelines and risk assessments be updated accordingly.

CLUB HUTS

The BMC have developing specific guidance for clubs which can be accessed here:

www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/BMC_Hut_Reopening_v1.pdf

Mountaineering Scotland understands that each club hut is different in terms of layout, facilities etc and it would not be possible to produce more specific guidance that would cover all huts and situations. We are here to support clubs, however whether or not to open your hut is a matter for clubs to decide based on their individual circumstances and how current guidelines can be applied.

- **Cleanliness and hygiene** - Cleaning will be a key consideration for all accommodation providers under the current guidance and will be a particular challenge for club huts given the way they operate. For more information on managing hygiene/cleaning is available here. www.assc.co.uk/policy/cleaning-protocols-for-self-catering-properties-in-the-context-of-covid-19/
- **Occupancy** – Club hut managers should follow the current Scottish Government guidance for self-catering accommodation depending [on the local measures in place](#).
- **Unoccupancy Clause** - Hiscox are aware that due to lockdown that being able to monitor the property and perhaps do some work would be restricted due to lockdown. For this reason, they have extended their unoccupancy condition to offer assistance.
- **Public Liability Insurance** – As stated above our insurers have confirmed at this point there is no COVID exclusion under the Mountaineering Scotland liability insurance policy, however there is a duty of care owed to members and the public to ensure they are safe. This means in considering whether to re-open huts, clubs should continue to adhere to all government guidelines and ensure risk assessments and procedures are updated accordingly. We have been informed this position may change next year.

COACHES, LEADERS AND GUIDES

Paid and volunteer Qualified coaches, leaders, instructors or guides should refer to their specific professional association guidance on good practice during this phase of the Scottish Government route map. Mountain Training Scotland have developed specific COVID-19 advice for leaders, coaches and instructors:

- [Mountain Training Scotland – Coronavirus information](#)
- www.ami.org.uk
- www.bmg.org.uk/
- sportscotland.org.uk/covid-19/getting-coaches-ready-for-sport/

TABLE A: MOUNTAIN-RELATED ACTIVITY & PROTECTION LEVELS

		Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
OUTDOOR Mountain-related activity Organised outdoor mountain related activity	Overview	An outdoor sporting ‘field of play bubble’ can consist of a maximum of 30 people including coaches, officials and other support staff at any one time. Multiple bubbles, each with up to 30 people, can be used in training, competition or small-scale sporting events if all guidance is followed (200 max per day unless with exemption).				Scottish Government household number rules apply for exercise, sport and recreation.
	Children & Young people (u18 years)	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Non-contact sport & PA permitted
	Adults (18+ years)				Contact sport & PA prohibited	
INDOOR SPORT Organised indoor climbing and bouldering.	Overview	The number of participants allowed to take part in organised indoor sport or physical activity should follow Scottish Government guidance on the opening of sport and leisure facilities and sport specific SGB Guidance . ‘Group’ activity refers to adults, from more than 2 households (6 members) who take part in organised sport or physical activity. ‘Individual exercise’ refers to organised sport or physical activity within household rules i.e. 1:1 coaching. For further information see definitions within this guidance.				
	Children & Young people (u18 years)	Contact & non-contact sport permitted	Contact & non-contact sport permitted	Contact & non-contact sport permitted	Contact & non-contact sport permitted	Indoor sport prohibited: Leisure Centres, gyms and other

	Adults (18+ years)		Non-contact sport permitted Contact sport prohibited	Non-contact sport permitted Contact sport prohibited	Indoor <u>individual exercise only</u> No contact or non-contact group activity	indoor sports facilities closed. Exemptions available for professional /performance sport
COACHING	Overview	General guidance is available within this document for coaches, leaders, personal trainers, deliverers and instructors, <i>herein referred to as coach/es</i> . In addition Getting Coaches Ready for Sport provides a 4-stage approach/checklist to further support coaches to plan and deliver safe sessions.				
	Indoor & Outdoor coaching	The local protection Level in place for sport and physical activity will dictate what activity can be coached, indoors and outdoors and to whom in that area. See indoor / outdoor above for further information. Coaches can take multiple sessions per day, however the numbers allowed in each session will depend upon the protection Level in place.				
TRAVEL	Indoor / Outdoor Sport & Physical Activity	For further information please refer to the current Scottish Government travel guidance and the travel and transport information in the document above.				
WORKFORCE	Contractors & Staff	Sports facility operators must ensure that Scottish Government guidance on workforce planning in sport & leisure facilities is followed for contractors and staff and ensure existing health and safety advice is maintained and aligned. This should be detailed in the risk assessment.				
	Meeting Rooms	Consider whether meetings and training must be completed in person or whether alternative approaches can be used. If it is essential that meetings and training takes place in person, Scottish Government guidance for general workplaces must be followed and a risk assessment should be completed.				

FURTHER INFORMATION & RESOURCES

- COVID-19 public health guidelines for Scotland – staying at home and physical distancing: www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/
- COVID-19 advice from Health Protection Scotland on hand hygiene: www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/hand-hygiene/
- COVID-19: Framework for decision making – overview of public engagement: www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-overview-public-engagement/
- Access to the outdoors during the coronavirus outbreak: guidance for the public and land managers: www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/access-outdoors-during-current-coronavirus-outbreak-guidance-public-and-land-managers
- Advice on cleaning and maintaining climbing equipment: www.papertrail.io/blog/covid-19-links-and-resources-for-equipment-owners-and-managers
- Advice on for first aiders during COVID-19: www.sja.org.uk/get-advice/first-aid-advice/covid-19-advice-for-first-aiders



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