



Phase 3: Guidance for affiliated clubs during COVID-19

(Updated 31/7/20)

Mountaineering Scotland is the representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers and ski tourers in Scotland, with over 14,500 members and 162 affiliated walking, mountaineering and climbing clubs.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide a framework for hill walking, mountaineering and climbing clubs within the current Scottish Government public health advice and phase of exit from lockdown, while highlighting additional considerations to be aware of in the presence of COVID-19 when taking part in these activities.

For activity specific advice please refer to the general guidance for hillwalkers and climbers in Scotland: www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/pdf/2020-07-09-Phase-3-guidance-final-version.pdf

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.

IMPORTANT: Do not leave your home for any reason 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. People who are symptomatic should book a test and self-isolate for 10 days; household members should self-isolate for 14 days as per the [NHS guidance](#). No one who is self-isolating should attend an outdoor sports activity or leave their home for exercise or physical activity.

Please note: public health advice and guidance for Scotland may differ from that of England and Wales. Information on Scottish Government approach to managing COVID -19 is available at [Scottish Government: Coronavirus in Scotland](#)

Phase 3: Key considerations

- **Be COVID aware** – ensure all club members follow the public health advice for physical distancing and hand hygiene.
- **Be prepared:** Check that car parks, toilets and other facilities open in advance.
- **Be safe:** Plan ahead, have suitable clothing, footwear and equipment and stay well within your limits and that of your group - whatever your activity - to avoid the need for rescue and emergency services.
- **Be considerate:** Think about how your actions might impact on others and follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code at all times.

Club responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of each club committee and activity organiser to undertake documented risk assessment, based on their local circumstances, prior to activity taking place. Consider safety first, particularly focusing on minimising the risk of infection/transmission. Appropriate measures must be put in place to ensure participants, staff and volunteers are always protected.
- Only outdoor sport and physical activity should be undertaken at this time with all indoor exercise and changing areas remaining closed.
- Clubs should communicate clearly and regularly with members and participants setting out what they are doing to manage risk, and what advice they are giving to individuals before, during and after visits to the venue/activity.
- Make them aware in advance of measures you are putting in place and guidelines they are asked to follow. Ideally clubs should publish an action plan detailing their plans to re-open safely.

Club/group activities

See appendix 1 for simplified chart outlining age-specific rules for physical distancing and meeting up with others.

- From 10 July you may participate in outdoor non-contact activities including walking, bouldering, climbing and scrambling on your own, with members of your own household and with members of up to four other households (with 2m physical distancing).
- Groups should contain no more than 15 people, but less if possible. You should not meet people from more than four other households each day, whether indoors or outdoors.
- This means that organised activities that would involve people from more than five households are not permitted.
- **Children and young people (aged 0 to17): outdoors** - the same rules apply to children as adults, except:
 - Children aged 0 to 11 do not need to maintain physical distancing
 - There is no limit to the number of households that children aged 0-11 can meet in one day.
 - Young people aged 12 to 17 can meet up to 15 people from up to 4 other households at a time, same as adults. But there is no limit to the number of households that they can meet in one day. This means that young people can meet their friends separately from meetings that other members of their household may be having.
- Shielding will be paused from 1 August 2020. This will mean that those who were shielding can follow the same guidance as the rest of Scotland. To stay safe, you should strictly follow physical distancing and hygiene measures. More details on the [Scottish Government website](#).

Planning outdoor activities

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

www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/pdf/2020-07-09-Phase-3-guidance-final-version.pdf

- Be mindful of how others may feel about group activities – not everyone may wish to participate at this time or feel comfortable being around larger groups.
- Plans may need to change at short notice, so consider whether it is wise to plan more than 3-6 months in advance.
- Consider the level of activities being organised and whether they are suitable for participants who may need to build up fitness/strength again after lockdown.
- We advise clubs to update risk assessments for all club activities to cover key points relating to managing risk of COVID-19 transmission and information provided to participants before and during activities.
- It is recommended that each household group makes their own transport arrangements. Check that there is adequate parking available and have an alternative plan in case it's too busy where you are going.

Meeting with people from other households

- Adults and young people of 12+ must maintain physical distancing of at least 2m as well as cough/hand hygiene. Does the location you're planning to go to lend itself to adequate physical distancing within your own group and with other people?
- Bring your own food, drink and equipment and avoid sharing equipment.
- Ensure that any equipment used is cleaned or quarantined after use (see further resources).
- Keep a note of who came along and their contact details to help with contact tracing if this becomes necessary.
- 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.
- Think about how you can manage a situation where someone in your group is non-compliant with physical distancing or other measures in place.

Insurance

- At this stage, there is not a 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.

Social meets

- With the reopening of pubs and cafes, clubs should check the latest Scottish Government public health advice on [staying safe and meeting others](#) if considering arranging social meets.

Club huts

The BMC have developed specific guidance for clubs and have kindly agreed that we can make it available to our member clubs. The guidance 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. This is a difficult decision with restrictions still in place and clubs may wish to hold off and defer reopening until restrictions are eased further.

- **Plans to reopen** –If you are planning to reopen your hut in the near future we would be very grateful if you could let us know and whether you would be happy to share your experience with other clubs. Contact either huts@mountain.scot or info@mountaineering.scot
- **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 visit www.assc.co.uk/policy/cleaning-protocols-for-self-catering-properties-in-the-context-of-covid-19/
- **Occupancy** – Should clubs wish to open on a limited basis from Friday the 10th July a household can meet up to 2 other households at a time – up to 8 people in total. This includes overnight stays. From 15th July all holiday accommodation is permitted to open (following relevant guidance).
- **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:

- www.mountain-training.org/
- www.ami.org.uk
- www.bmg.org.uk/
- sportscotland.org.uk/covid-19/getting-coaches-ready-for-sport/

Appendix 1: Age-specific guidelines for physical distancing and meeting with others

	0-11	12-17	18+
Physical distancing	No physical distancing	Physically distance from others aged 12 or over	2m except with own household
Meeting with other households (indoors)	Children can meet with up to 2 other households indoors without physical distancing	12-17 yr olds can meet with up to 2 other households indoors	3 different households can meet indoors (including your own) with physical distancing
Meeting with other households (outdoors)	Children can meet with up to 4 other households at a time without the children following physical distancing	12-17 yr olds can meet up to 4 other households at a time, and should continue to physically distance from others aged 12 or over	5 different households, including your own household with physical distancing.
Max no of other households /day	No limit (Limit remains for accompanying adults)	No limit (Limit remains for accompanying adults)	4 other households (not including own)
Maximum group size	Max 15 (outdoors) Max 8 (indoors)	Max 15 (outdoors) Max 8 (indoors)	Max 15 (outdoors) Max 8 (indoors)
Organised outdoor sports	<p>Children aged 11 years and younger are not required to physically distance. This extends to organised sports activity and the field of play.</p> <p>Specific consideration should be given to supervision of children under the age of 5 years as it is not appropriate for young children to maintain the models of physical distancing that are suitable for older children, either practically or in terms of child development. You may, for instance, ask a parent or carer to be present.</p>	<p>A 'field of play bubble' can be created during organised sports activity that allows contact whilst the activity is taking place, in effect suspending physical distancing guidelines for the duration of the activity.</p> <p>Normal physical distancing guidelines will however apply before and after the activity takes place.</p>	<p>Coaches and other adults supporting organised activity should attempt to keep physically distant where possible, but it is recognised that this will not always be possible. In such circumstances appropriate mitigating actions should be considered and recorded as part of the risk assessment.</p> <p>All adults involved in coaching / actively engaging with children in an organised environment should have undertaken appropriate SGB safeguarding and, where available, Covid-19 training.</p> <p>Parents/carers who are supervising their children should abide by Scottish Government physical distancing guidance and stay at least 2m away from those out with their own household. Groups of parents from different households should not congregate before, during or after the activity.</p>

Further information

- 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
- Questions and Answers from Scottish Mountain Rescue: www.scottishmountainrescue.org/covid-19-information/
- 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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