



Press Release

9 April 2020

For immediate release

Easter plea to hillwalkers

Mountaineering Scotland asks people to put return to the hills on hold to help combat virus spread

The Easter weekend is traditionally the time when people plan to get back into the Scottish hills and mountains after the winter.

But the organisation which represents mountaineers and hillwalkers in Scotland is asking people, no matter how keen, to put their plans on hold.

Stuart Younie, Chief Executive Officer of Mountaineering Scotland, said: “Many of our members have been walking and climbing throughout the winter, but for many this is normally their first return to the hills after a long lay-off, and is eagerly anticipated.”

However he urged everyone to show restraint and follow the advice from the Scottish Government.

That is, to stay at home, going outside only for essential food, health and work reasons.

The current guidance means we should avoid non-essential travel, however Mountaineering Scotland actively encourages members to continue taking daily exercise and to get outside for health reasons in their local area, in accordance with the updated advice below:

- Stay local – do not travel in your car to take exercise; please make use of the paths, open spaces and quiet roads in your own local area
- Maintain your distance – stay at least 2 metres away from other people and if possible, try to avoid busy times on popular paths or places
- Respect the health and safety of farmers and others working the land – follow all reasonable requests and signs to avoid particular areas, such as farmyards, fields with pregnant or young livestock, and other busy working areas
- Keep your dog under control – put them on a lead or keep them close at heel and do not let them approach other people or livestock
- Avoid contact – try to avoid touching surfaces and if possible, plan a route that does not require you to open gates

Mountaineering Scotland is actively engaged with Scottish Natural Heritage and other partners on the impact of the current health crisis on access rights, and welcomes the commitment made to the development of further guidance in consultation with key stakeholders. The body is looking to ensure that when the restrictions are lifted people are able to safely get back to enjoying the freedoms – and responsibilities – associated with Scotland’s access legislation.

Stuart Younie added: “I’d like to thank all our members who have been acting responsibly and staying local in accordance with the current guidance. It has been encouraging to hear that for the second weekend running we have had no reported mountain rescue call outs and we hope this will continue until restrictions are lifted.

“We know it’s important during this period that people can continue to get outside for exercise and health reasons and the statement today from the Cabinet Secretary on access rights and responsibilities is a step in the right direction. We also welcome the commitment to developing further guidance in consultation with key stakeholders.”

Ends

Notes for editors:

Further information contact:

Neil Reid, Communications Officer, on 01738 493941 or 07444545293 or neil@mountaineering.scot

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.
- Mountaineering Scotland, The Granary, West Mill Street, Perth PH1 5QP
- Website: www.mountaineering.scot