



# How to hire a peak professional

With Scott Kirkhope, Development Officer for the Association of Mountaineering Instructors (AMI)

**E**ngaging a mountain professional is a great way to help achieve your goals or ambitions while building your confidence and experience. However, choosing someone to put your trust in can be a challenge in its own right! If you're planning to hire a professional mountaineer, we offer the following advice:

## Decide what you want to achieve

- Is it a guiding/leading service or an instructional/coaching service? This will have a direct effect the level of experience and or qualification required by the professional.

- Always discuss your aims when you approach a professional or company for the first time and be totally honest and open with them about your experience and fitness.

## Research the market

- Be aware there is no comprehensive statutory requirement for a person offering professional services in the mountains to hold any particular qualification. While qualifications alone are not a reason just to go with one person or company, a qualification shows individuals or staff have been trained and assessed to an agreed standard by their peers.
- We suggest you make your choice by finding







out about what qualifications the professional has, what professional development they currently undertake, their relevant experience in the activity or particular chosen location or route and insurance levels.

- Ask about insurance. Regardless of qualification, we suggest you check whether the professional has appropriate professional liability or indemnity insurance and that it is current. In the absence of evidence of such insurance, our recommendation would be to look elsewhere.
- Once you have a few options, reach out to those individuals or businesses and let them know what you would like to do. The cheapest price isn't always going to be the best. You may

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find the way individuals or companies answer your questions will tell you whether you want to engage their services or not.

- Check the reviews. There are plenty of ways to gather reviews and build a bigger picture about an individual or company. There are a number of review sites along with social media platforms, and don't forget the power of word of mouth from someone you trust.

#### **How to check for qualifications**

- Many professionals will hold qualifications awarded under the various schemes administered by Mountain Training ([www.mountain-training.org](http://www.mountain-training.org)), including Members of the Association of Mountaineering Instructors, British Mountain Guides or The Mountain Training Association.
- Current membership of an appropriate professional organisation, such as the Association of Mountaineering Instructors. By being such a member, the individual is subject to requirements of continuing professional development and kept informed of developments in practice in their professional work. AMI members adhere to a code of conduct and have professional standard policies.
- The Association of Mountaineering Instructors has a handy search function so you can find an instructor or guide based on location or activity that they are qualified to offer. SM



**ASSOCIATION OF MOUNTAINEERING INSTRUCTORS**

The Association of Mountaineering Instructors (AMI) is the representative body for professional qualified Mountaineering Instructors in the UK and Ireland.

AMI members are highly experienced mountaineers who have undergone rigorous training and assessment to qualify under the Mountain Training UK (MTUK) Mountaineering Instructor scheme.

The AMI is committed to promoting good practice in all mountaineering instruction. By employing an AMI member, you will be in the very best hands. Look for the AMI logo as assurance of high-quality instruction.

**To find out more, visit: [www.ami.org.uk](http://www.ami.org.uk)**



Scott Kirkhope is a Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor (WMCI) living and working, year-round in the Scottish Highlands. He runs Elite Guides, which offers guiding and instruction across the Highlands, from the North West, to Skye, Ben Nevis and Glencoe.