



Press Release

21 October 2020

For immediate release

Take a torch for the hills

Hill walkers urged not to be left in the dark when the clocks go back this weekend

A headtorch – and a spare – should be essential items in every walker’s rucksack as British Summer Time comes to an end.

Mountain rescue teams have had a busy summer and have already had incidents this year where walkers either haven’t had a torch, or have had a torch but discovered they were not able to get themselves back off the hill once darkness fell.

Heather Morning, Mountain Safety Adviser with Mountaineering Scotland said: “It has been good to see so many new people enjoying Scotland’s mountains this summer, and we hope they will continue to enjoy the great benefits that access to the outdoors brings. It’s important to stay safe though.

“People will have already noticed the days getting shorter, but this is really emphasised once the clocks change, and the chances are now much greater that you may end your walk in darkness.

“You should take spare batteries with you, although they can be very awkward to change if you’re working in the dark and the rain, so it’s better always to take a spare headtorch in your pack, with fully charged batteries already installed.”

The shorter daylight hours also see a drop in temperatures and the first dusting of snow on the hills, meaning it’s a good time for hillwalkers to review what they carry in their packs.

Extra layers should be considered, with the addition of a synthetic duvet jacket and emergency shelter stored in the bottom of your rucksack just in case you are stationary on the hill for any length of time.

Hats, gloves (at least two pairs are recommended) and face protection (such as a Buff) will all add to comfort on the hill as autumn progresses into winter.

Heather added that now was also a good time for climbers and walkers to consider whether they could benefit from extra skills and training.

“There’s a greater chance you will have to navigate in poor visibility, so that’s a basic hill skill which is definitely worth working on.”

Kevin Mitchell, vice-chair of Scottish Mountain Rescue said: “We would encourage hillgoers to be proficient in navigation, check weather reports and be aware of when darkness will fall.

“However if they become benighted or injured they should not hesitate to call out Scottish Mountain Rescue volunteer teams by calling 999 and asking for Police, then Mountain Rescue. Scottish Mountain Rescue Teams are on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Ian Sherrington, Head of Training at sportscotland National Outdoor Training Centre, Glenmore Lodge added: “This is an important time for all of us to shake off our planning and packing skills for the coming winter. Conditions in the hills can turn quickly. So as well as packing all the kit you need, plan to go early so you can return easily in daylight hours. It makes all the difference to a good day out.”

Ends

Notes for editors:

Image: Navigating off the hill in darkness. Headtorches are an essential piece of kit. (Photo by Paul Diffley)

<http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/DSC05556.JPG>

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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.
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