



Press Release

8 November 2017

For immediate release

Hill walkers and climbers: Are you ready for winter?

Experts advise on making the most out of winter - safely

Hill walkers and climbers are being urged to stay safe as they prepare to enjoy what for many is the most rewarding season of the year.

With winter now starting to bite, many hillwalkers and climbers will be looking out their ice axes, crampons and headtorches. But mountaineering experts have stressed that it takes much more than this to be ready for winter.

Mountaineering Scotland has highlighted the high quality of online information which can be easily accessed before heading for the hills.

Mountain Safety Adviser Heather Morning said: "There are some excellent resources for mountain weather information. Check out www.mwis.org.uk and the excellent new Met Office mountain pages at www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/mountain-forecasts

"If there is snow on the ground, then check the sportscotland Avalanche Information Service (SAIS) at <http://www.sais.gov.uk/>, which provides free daily reports on snow conditions and an avalanche forecast for six mountain areas of Scotland."

General advice is also available through the Mountaineering Scotland website at www.mountaineering.scot and, in partnership with Tiso and Cotswold stores, the organisation is running a free winter safety lecture tour. Check out www.mountaineering.scot/safety-and-skills/courses-and-events/winter-safety-lectures for dates and venues.

Heather Morning said: "Folk heading out onto the hills in winter should take advantage of the advice and information on offer to ensure a safe and enjoyable day.

"As well as making sure you have an ice axe, and crampons that fit, remember that winter days are shorter and colder, so a headtorch with spare batteries is essential. A simple bivouac shelter is also a very good addition to the kit you carry in your winter rucksack."

Kev Mitchell, vice chair of Scottish Mountain Rescue, said: "Mountain Rescue in Scotland is provided free by world class volunteers on call at all times and in all

weathers. We fully endorse the Mountaineering Scotland winter safety message and would encourage hillgoers to ensure that they have left details of their intended route and expected return time.

“People should also be aware of and use the latest navigation / location technology such as GPS or OS locate and other similar apps to avoid navigation errors. However, it is critical that a paper map and a compass are carried and that people know how to use them.

“If you require assistance on the hills, dial 999 ask for Police then Mountain Rescue.”

For more essential winter mountaineering advice go to the Mountaineering Scotland website at www.mountaineering.scot/activities/mountaineering/winter-mountaineering.

For more details of Scottish Mountain Rescue teams see <http://www.scottishmountainrescue.org/>

Ends

Notes for editors:

Image: <http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/DSC00801.jpg>

Mountain Safety Adviser Heather Morning enjoying crisp, clear Scottish winter conditions in the mountains.

Further information contact:

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About Mountaineering Scotland:

- Mountaineering Scotland is the only recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers and ski-tourers who live in Scotland or who enjoy Scotland's mountains.
- 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 14,000 members representing hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers, 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 has launched the ClimbScotland initiative to encourage young people to participate in climbing and support their progression. It offers a dedicated website and a development team, which will introduce young people to climbing at schools, climbing walls and via youth organisations with a range of activities and events, while developing kids clubs and providing specialist support to parents, volunteers and teachers.
- Mountaineering Scotland is the national governing body for sports 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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