



Guidance for clubs and groups during COVID-19

Updated: 26 April 2021

INTRODUCTION

From the 26th of April some of the rules on what you can and cannot do change to allow organised sport to take place outwith your local authority area, the reopening of tourist accommodation (including club huts) and the ability to stay away from home overnight within Level 3 areas. The continued presence of COVID-19 and the new variants of the virus means that we still need to take extra care with our preparations and how we conduct ourselves while hill walking, climbing and getting to and from walks/climbs.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide a framework for clubs organising hill walking and climbing activity in Scotland to be used alongside the current Scottish Government public health advice, highlighting additional considerations to be aware of in the presence of COVID-19 when taking part in these activities.

LOCAL PROTECTION LEVELS IN SCOTLAND

A 5-level system of local measures is in place in Scotland.

All areas of Scotland moved to Level 3 from the 26th April. Clubs and participants should be aware of their local area protection level and associated restrictions for travel and groups sizes and consider this when planning outdoor activity. Please use the Scottish Government post code checker to find out which level your area is in,

- [Local protection levels by area](#) and [post code checker](#) (Scottish Government website)

Broad guidance for sporting activity which should be followed within each level is set out in Table A below.

TRAVELLING TO THE SCOTTISH ISLANDS: PRE-DEPARTURE TESTING

- To reduce the risk of coronavirus being brought into island communities by people who are unaware they are infectious, the Scottish Government is encouraging anyone planning to travel to a Scottish island to test before they do so. You can [order rapid lateral flow tests](#) for delivery to your home anywhere in the UK and they should arrive within 24-48 hours. It is recommended that you test three days before you plan to travel and then again on the day of departure. If you test positive, you should self-isolate and book a PCR test.

- Please note that if your test result is negative, this is not a guarantee that you do not have coronavirus. You must continue to follow national and local restrictions, including [FACTS guidance](#). If you develop coronavirus symptoms you must self-isolate and book a [PCR test](#).
- This is a voluntary scheme and you do not need evidence of a negative test to travel to a Scottish island. However, participation is encouraged in order to reduce the risk that you inadvertently carry coronavirus into one of our island communities.

Note: For the purposes of the latest guidance all forms of walking and climbing are classed as non-contact sporting activity

IMPORTANT: Do not leave your home to undertake exercise or physical activity 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.

Please note: Public health advice and guidance for Scotland may differ from that of England and Wales (information for England and Wales is available on the [BMC website](#)).

Information on Scottish Government approach to managing COVID -19 is available at [Scottish Government: Coronavirus in Scotland](#).

We urge everyone heading out to enjoy the outdoors to be mindful of how their individual actions reflect on the whole outdoor community and to be aware of the concerns that rural and remote communities may have about the risk of transmission from areas where the virus is more prevalent. We ask 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.

PLANNING CLUB ACTIVITIES

Definitions:

- **‘Informal sport or physical activity’** is that which adheres to the Scottish Govt rules for informal outdoor recreation/exercise and meeting others outdoors socially (household rules) along with all the usual COVID measures (physical distancing etc).
- **‘Organised sporting or physical activity’** refers to activities which are undertaken in a structured and managed way following the specific rules and guidance we have provided for clubs in order to participate in larger group sizes. All organised activity should be overseen by a Covid Officer with documented risk assessments undertaken and mitigating actions put in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of participants, coaches and officials (more details below)

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

www.mountaineering.scot/coronavirus

- **Be mindful of how others may feel about group activities** – not everyone may wish to participate or feel comfortable being around larger groups.
- **Plans may need to change at short notice**, so consider whether it is wise to plan too far in advance.
- **Consider the level of activities being organised** and whether they are suitable for participants’ level of experience and competence.
- **Travel and transport** - Travel guidance provided by the Scottish Government should always be followed. Further information on what travel is permitted is available at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on travel and transport](#). Information for each local authority area, including their level is available at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): local protection levels](#) including a post code checker.
- From the 26th of April travel for outdoor recreation and exercise is allowed at within all level 3 areas of Scotland and between Scotland and the rest of the UK. More details [here](#).
- **Car sharing** - Specific information on car sharing is available from [Transport Scotland: advice on how to travel safely](#).

CLUB/GROUP ACTIVITIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- It is the responsibility of each club committee, sports facility operator and/or deliverer (herein referred to as the operator) to appoint one or more responsible person/s, referred to as the [COVID officer](#), to act as the point of contact on all things related to COVID-19. An [e-learning module for COVID officers](#) is available to support those undertaking the role.
- The COVID officer(s) **must** ensure that full risk assessments, processes and mitigating actions are in place before any sport or leisure activity takes place. Specific consideration should be given to the needs of those who are at greater risk including some older adults or those with disabilities.
- Clubs are advised to publish an action plan detailing their plans to carry out activities safely.
- Clubs should communicate clearly and regularly with members and participants setting out what they are doing to manage risk, measures that are in place and guidelines participants are asked to follow before, during and after visits to the venue/activity.
- [Test and Protect](#) measures must be implemented for all organised activities to assist NHS Scotland with contact tracing in the event of a virus outbreak. Contact details must be collected and retained for 21 days for each group lead/organised walk and consideration should be given to the particular risks to older members and those who are in more vulnerable groups.
- Think about how you would manage a situation where someone in your club or group is non-compliant with physical distancing or other measures in place.
- Members should be responsible for bringing their own food, drink and equipment and avoid sharing equipment where possible.
- Ensure that any equipment used is cleaned or quarantined after use (see further resources).
- 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.
- Those who were shielding can follow the same guidance as the rest of Scotland. To stay safe, they should strictly follow physical distancing and hygiene measures. More details on the [Scottish Government website](#).

ORGANISED CLUB ACTIVITY:

‘Organised sporting or physical activity’ refers to activities which are undertaken in a structured and managed way following the specific rules and guidance we have provided for clubs in order to participate safely in larger groups.

- In level 0, 1, 2 and 3 areas, clubs and groups can hold organised activities/meets for up to 30 people (adults and children including the leader(s)) from any number of households with 2m physical distancing

at all times, however we would advise keeping groups small (around 6 – 8 people) to ensure they are easier to manage.

- **Level 3:** From Monday 26th April travel between Level 3 areas is permitted for organised sport in groups of up to 30 participants. Please note that should an area move to L0-L2 or back to L4 after 26 April, travel is restricted in and out i.e. you could not travel from a L3 area to a L2 area or vice versa.
- **Level 4:** In Level 4 areas, activity can take place in groups of up to 15 people including the leader(s), but should not take place outside your local authority area. Children and young people 17 or under may travel into or out of a Level 4 area for organised activity if that is where their sport, club or activity usually takes place.

Travel Summary (Organised sport and physical activity)

Age Group	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
U18s	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
18+ (Adults)	✓	✓	✓	L3 Travel Only	Local Travel Only

- If clubs are booking commercial buses/coaches or use an adventure tourism company, this falls under the guidance from Transport Scotland.
- [Test and Protect](#) measures should be implemented for all organised activities to assist NHS Scotland with contact tracing in the event of a virus outbreak.
- Participants should only travel in private vehicles with members of their own, or extended, household, except in an emergency, and parking is a consideration if you are planning larger organised meets (see travel and transport guidance above).

INFORMAL CLUB ACTIVITY:

- For club members wishing to meet each other in an informal way outdoors (i.e. under the general household rules for meeting others outdoors for informal outdoor recreation/exercise):
 - **In level 3 and 4 areas** up to six adults from six separate households can meet outdoors for informal sport or exercise. Children under 12 do not count towards the total number of people counted in a gathering.
 - **In level 4 areas** young people aged 12 to 17 can also meet outdoors in groups of up to six people from six different households for informal sport or exercise.
 - Where separate households are participating, 2m physical distancing should always be maintained.
- The members of an individual household or extended household can meet for outdoor recreation.

SOCIAL MEETS

- If arranging social meets, clubs should follow the latest Scottish Government public health guidelines [on the Scottish Government website](#).

INSURANCE

- Under the Mountaineering Scotland liability insurance policy, 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.

CLUB HUTS

Tourist accommodation (including hostels and club huts) can re-open from the 26th of April 2021. We understand many clubs will be keen to re-open access to their huts but at this point occupancy should be limited to single households. This may change with the intended move to Level 2 in the exit from lockdown on the 17th May where more than one household may be able to meet indoors.

At this point there has been no further update to the BMC guidance document “Reopening Club Huts During COVID-19” however we are working with the BMC to ensure consistent messaging to clubs across the UK to reflect any changes in the national and sector specific guidance whilst recognising the different approaches being taken by the UK and Scottish governments.

The BMC guidance for club huts 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.

- **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 is available here. www.assc.co.uk/policy/cleaning-protocols-for-self-catering-properties-in-the-context-of-covid-19/
- **Occupancy** – Club hut managers should follow the current Scottish Government guidance for self-catering accommodation depending [on the local measures in place](#).

- **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 – Under the current policy there remains 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.

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. Mountain Training Scotland have developed specific COVID-19 advice for leaders, coaches and instructors:

- [Mountain Training Scotland – Coronavirus information](#)
- www.ami.org.uk
- www.bmg.org.uk/
- sportscotland.org.uk/covid-19/getting-coaches-ready-for-sport/

TABLE A: MOUNTAIN-RELATED ACTIVITY & PROTECTION LEVELS

		Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
OUTDOOR SPORT Organised outdoor sport, competition, events and Physical Activity (PA)	Overview An outdoor sporting ‘field of play bubble’ may consist of participants including coaches, officials and other support staff with maximum numbers allowed in each level noted below. Multiple bubbles can be used for training and SGB competition if appropriate guidance, set out within this document, is followed. Indoor and outdoor stadium, or equivalent events/competitions, involving spectators are subject to relevant Scottish Government guidance and approval. Other outdoor participation events are permitted subject to further Scottish Government clarification on numbers.	* Subject to SG Confirmation				Local training/competition only. U12s: max 30 including coaches. Over 12s/adults max 15 including coaches.
	Children & Young people (u18 years)	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Maximum bubble size: 30 Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	U12s: Contact sport & PA permitted 12-17 years: Non-contact sport & PA permitted.
	Adults (18+ years)	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Non-contact sport & PA permitted Contact sport & PA prohibited	Non-contact sport & PA permitted Contact sport & PA prohibited
INDOOR SPORT Organised indoor sport, competition, events and Physical Activity (PA)	Overview The number of participants allowed to take part in organised indoor sport or physical activity should follow Scottish Government guidance on the opening of sport and leisure facilities and sport specific SGB Guidance . ‘Group’ activity refers to adults, who take part in organised sport or physical activity, where the number of participants is larger than allowed under normal household rules. ‘Individual exercise’ refers to organised sport or physical activity which takes place within household rules i.e. 1:1 coaching. For further information see definitions within this guidance.					
	Children & Young people (u18 years)	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Indoor sport & PA prohibited: Leisure Centres, gyms and other indoor sports facilities closed.
	Adults (18+ years)	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Non-contact sport & PA permitted Contact sport & PA prohibited	Non-contact sport & PA permitted Contact sport & PA prohibited	Indoor <u>individual exercise only</u> No contact or non-contact group activity	

COACHING	Overview	General guidance is available within this document for coaches, leaders, personal trainers, deliverers and instructors, <i>herein referred to as coach/es</i> . In addition Getting Coaches Ready for Sport provides a 4-stage approach/checklist to further support coaches to plan and deliver safe sessions.	
	Indoor & Outdoor coaching	The local protection Level in place for sport and physical activity will dictate what activity can be coached, indoors and outdoors and to whom in that area. See indoor / outdoor above for further information. Coaches can take multiple sessions per day, however the numbers allowed in each session will depend upon the protection Level in place.	
PERFORMANCE SPORT	Professional & Performance	Professional & performance sports with Resumption of Performance Sport guidance in place and approved by Scottish Government or sportscotland is permitted at all Levels.	
TRAVEL	Indoor / Outdoor Sport & Physical Activity	For further information please refer to Travel Guidance within this document.	
HOSPITALITY & RETAIL	Clubs & Sports Facilities	Clubhouses and sports facilities which provide catering and bar services, can operate providing they adhere to Scottish Government guidance appropriate to the protection Level in which they are operating. Further information is available at Coronavirus (COVID-19): tourism and hospitality sector guidance . Retail units operated by sports facility operators may reopen provided all specific Scottish Government guidance for retailers appropriate to the protection level in which they are operating is in place and adhered to. Further information from the Scottish Government is available at Retail Sector Guidance .	
TOILETS, CHANGING & SHOWER ROOMS	Clubs & Sports Facilities	Where changing rooms and showering facilities are to be used specific guidance relating to use of 'Changing and Showers' is available at Getting Your Facilities Fit for Sport . This is applicable at all levels where facilities remain open.	Indoor sports facilities closed. Changing rooms closed.
		Operators may open public toilets if they follow the guidelines outlined on the Scottish Government website Opening Public Toilets Guidelines	Public Toilets open.
WORKFORCE	Contractors & Staff	Sports facility operators must ensure that Scottish Government guidance on workforce planning in sport & leisure facilities is followed for contractors and staff and ensure existing health and safety advice is maintained and aligned. This should be detailed in the risk assessment.	
	Meeting Rooms	Although gym and leisure facilities can open up to Level 3, we would encourage providers to consider whether meetings and training must be completed in person or whether these can be completed online or via telephone. If it is essential that meetings	

and training takes place in person, [Scottish Government guidance for general workplaces](#) must be followed and a risk assessment should be completed.

FURTHER INFORMATION & RESOURCES

- 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
- 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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