



9 October 2020

Phase 3: Guidance for clubs and groups during COVID-19

Temporary COVID measures are in currently place for 5 health board areas – check for details on the Scottish Government website: www.gov.scot/news/new-moves-to-stop-covid-19-spread/

Mountaineering Scotland is the representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers and ski tourers in Scotland, with over 14,500 members and 162 affiliated walking, mountaineering and climbing clubs.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide a framework for hill walking, mountaineering and climbing clubs within the current Scottish Government public health advice and phase of exit from lockdown, while highlighting additional considerations to be aware of in the presence of COVID-19 when taking part in these activities.

For activity specific advice please refer to the general guidance for hillwalkers and climbers in Scotland on the [Mountaineering Scotland website](#).

We urge everyone heading out to enjoy the outdoors to be mindful of how their individual actions reflect on the whole outdoor community. The key will be for 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.

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. People who are symptomatic should self-isolate for 10 days and household members for 14 days as per info on [NHS guidance](#). No one who is self-isolating should attend a sports facility or activity.

We are also encouraging everyone to download the [Protect Scotland app](#) which, designed to help us protect each other, reduce the spread of coronavirus and avoid further lockdowns.

Please note: public health advice and guidance for Scotland may differ from that of England and Wales. Information on Scottish Government approach to managing COVID -19 is available at [Scottish Government: Coronavirus in Scotland](#)

Phase 3: Key considerations

- **Be COVID aware** – ensure all club members follow the public health advice for physical distancing and hand hygiene.
- **Be prepared:** Check that car parks, toilets and other facilities open in advance.

- **Be safe:** Plan ahead, have suitable clothing, footwear and equipment and stay well within your limits and that of your group - whatever your activity - to avoid the need for rescue and emergency services.
- **Be considerate:** Think about how your actions might impact on others and follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code at all times.

Club/group activities

See appendix 1 for simplified chart outlining age-specific rules for physical distancing and meeting up with others.

- **From the 11th of September you may meet outdoors with members of one other household, up to a maximum group size of 6, for informal exercise or activity. If club members wish to head outdoors in Scotland in an informal way (i.e. not as a club meet) the 'rule of 6' people in a group from no more than 2 households will apply.**
- From 24th August, clubs can hold organised walks for up to 30 people (adults and children) from any number of households (with 2m physical distancing).
- For organised group walks, [Test and Protect](#) measures should be implemented for all 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 led/organised walk and consideration should be given to the particular risks to older members and those who are in more vulnerable groups. A leaflet providing information on the Test and Protect service from NHS Scotland is also available [here](#).
- You should only travel with members of your own, or extended, household, except in an emergency, so car sharing is still not allowed and parking is a consideration if you are planning larger organised meets.
- If clubs are booking commercial buses/coaches or use an adventure tourism company then this falls under the guidance from Transport Scotland and is allowed. Clubs should not hire their own mini bus and drive it themselves at this time.
- Travel guidance outlined by the Scottish Government should always be adhered to. Further information is available at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Phase 3: Staying safe and protecting others](#).
- Shielding has been paused from 1 August 2020. This will mean that 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](#).

Club responsibilities

- Clubs must appoint a [COVID-19 officer](#) to ensure appropriate processes are in place so that they can effectively oversee the implementation of the necessary measures to keep members safe during an organised meet. A sportscotland e-learning module for COVID Officers is available [here](#).
- It is the responsibility of each club committee and activity organiser to undertake a documented risk assessment, based on their local circumstances, prior to activity taking place. Consider safety first, particularly focusing on minimising the risk of virus transmission. Appropriate measures must be put in place to ensure participants, staff and volunteers are always protected.

- Coaches and leaders are able to deliver to young people aged 11 and under in non-contact sports activity in indoor facilities (including climbing walls) in accordance with guidance for undertaking their sports activity and coaches should also check with facility operators with regards to specific requirements.
- Clubs should communicate clearly and regularly with members and participants setting out what they are doing to manage risk, and what advice they are giving to individuals before, during and after visits to the venue/activity.
- Members should be made aware in advance of measures you are putting in place and guidelines they are asked to follow. Ideally clubs should publish an action plan detailing their plans to restart activities safely.
- Local lockdown measure may be in place – please check the information on the Scottish Government website if this applies to the area where your club members live:
www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-measures/

Planning outdoor activities

For activity-specific information, 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 at this time or feel comfortable being around larger groups.
- Plans may need to change at short notice, so consider whether it is wise to plan more than 3-6 months in advance.
- Consider the level of activities being organised and whether they are suitable for participants who may need to build up fitness/strength again after lockdown.
- We advise clubs to update their risk assessments for all club activities to cover key points relating to managing risk of COVID-19 transmission and information provided to participants before and during activities.
- While car sharing is not allowed, please check that there is adequate parking available and have an alternative plan in case it's too busy where you are going.

Meeting with people from other households

- Adults and young people of 12+ must maintain physical distancing of at least 2m as well as cough/hand hygiene. Does the location you're planning to go to lend itself to adequate physical distancing within your own group and with other people?
- Bring your own food, drink and equipment and avoid sharing equipment.
- Ensure that any equipment used is cleaned or quarantined after use (see further resources).
- Keep a record of who came along and their contact details. Track and Protect measures should be implemented for all activities to assist NHS Scotland in the event of a virus outbreak [Test and Protect](#)
- 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.
- Think about how you can manage a situation where someone in your group is non-compliant with physical distancing or other measures in place.

Insurance

- At this stage, there is not a COVID exclusion under the Mountaineering Scotland liability insurance policy, however 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.

Social meets

- Clubs should check the latest Scottish Government public health advice on [staying safe and meeting others](#) if considering arranging social meets.

Club huts

The BMC have developing specific guidance for clubs and have kindly agreed that we can make it available to our member clubs. The guidance 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. This is a difficult decision with restrictions still in place and clubs may wish to hold off and defer reopening until restrictions are eased further.

- **Plans to reopen** –If you are planning to reopen your hut in the near future we would be very grateful if you could let us know and whether you would be happy to share your experience with other clubs. Contact either huts@mountaineering.scot or info@mountaineering.scot
- **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 visit www.assc.co.uk/policy/cleaning-protocols-for-self-catering-properties-in-the-context-of-covid-19/
- **Occupancy** – From 23 September, people from more than one household (or extended household) must not stay in self-catered accommodation together.
- **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** – As stated above our insurers have confirmed at this point there is there is no COVID exclusion under the Mountaineering Scotland liability insurance policy, however there is 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. We have been informed this position may change next year.

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:

- www.mountain-training.org/
- www.ami.org.uk
- www.bmg.org.uk/
- sportscotland.org.uk/covid-19/getting-coaches-ready-for-sport/

Appendix 1: Age-specific guidelines for physical distancing and meeting with others

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-staying-safe-and-protecting-others/pages/seeing-friends-and-family/>

	0-11	12-17	18+
Physical distancing	No physical distancing	Physically distance from others aged 12 or over	2m except with own household
Meeting with other households (indoors)	Children can meet with up to 1 other household indoors without physical distancing	12-17 yr olds can meet with up to 1 other household indoors	2 different households can meet indoors (including your own) with physical distancing in groups of no more than 6
Meeting with other households (outdoors)	Children can meet with up to 1 other household indoors without physical distancing	12-17 yr olds can meet with up to 1 other household indoors	2 different households can meet outdoors (including your own) with physical distancing in groups of no more than 6
Max no of other households /day	No limit (Limit remains for accompanying adults)	No limit (limit remains for accompanying adults)	4 other households (not including own)
Maximum group size	N/A	Max 6	Max 6
Organised /led group activities	Organised outdoor groups with a maximum of 30. No limit on number of households.	Organised outdoor groups with a maximum of 30. No limit on number of households. Note: Normal physical distancing guidelines will however apply before and after the activity takes place.	Organised outdoor groups with a maximum of 30. No limit on number of households. Note: Normal physical distancing guidelines will however apply before and after the activity takes place.
Organised outdoor sports	Children aged 11 years and younger are not required to physically distance. This extends to organised sports activity and the field of play. Specific consideration should be given to supervision of children under the age of 5 years as it is not appropriate for young children to maintain the models of physical distancing that are suitable for older children, either practically or in terms of child development. You may, for instance, ask a parent or carer to be present.	A 'field of play bubble' can be created during organised contact sports activity that allows contact whilst the activity is taking place, in effect suspending physical distancing guidelines for the duration of the activity.	Coaches and other adults supporting organised contact sports activity should attempt to keep physically distant where possible, but it is recognised that this will not always be possible. In such circumstances appropriate mitigating actions should be considered and recorded as part of the risk assessment. All adults involved in coaching / actively engaging with children in an organised environment should have undertaken appropriate SGB safeguarding and, where available, Covid-19 training.

			Parents/carers who are supervising their children should abide by Scottish Government physical distancing guidance and stay at least 2m away from those out with their own household. Groups of parents from different households should not congregate before, during or after the activity.
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Further information

- 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
- Questions and Answers from Scottish Mountain Rescue: www.scottishmountainrescue.org/covid-19-information/
- 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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Updated: 9 October 2020