



Press Release

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For immediate release

Smoothing the way on the pistes

Mountaineering Scotland launches revised guidance for ski-tourers

Conflicts involving ski mountaineers using managed ski resorts in Scotland should be a thing of the past this winter.

In the past there have been occasional rows on the slopes of Scotland's managed ski resorts as the interests of snowsports tourers and facility operators have clashed. Often snowsports tourers use car parks at ski resorts and may cross through the managed pistes on their way to and from the mountains beyond.

Now, updated guidance aims to increase mutual understanding and consideration.

Snowsports touring in Scotland has been enjoying a major boost in popularity over recent winters. More and more people, on skis or snowboards, are breaking free from the traditional, managed ski resorts and enjoying the freedom of travelling through the glens and across the mountains.

It might be called back country skiing, ski mountaineering, ski touring or split boarding but whatever the name, the essence is getting away from crowded pistes and enjoying the freedom of the mountains.

The potential conflict of interests comes where ski resort facilities provide convenient access to the wider mountain area.

Mountaineering Scotland, through the Snowsport Touring Advisory Group and in consultation with the Association of Scottish Ski Areas, has now published a refreshed guidance leaflet: 'Snowsports Touring, Mountaineering and Managed Resorts in Scotland'.

The leaflet, which is available online and from outdoor shops, as well as ski resorts, explains to snowsports tourers how their activities can impact on the enjoyment of downhill skiers and the management of the resort.

Problems can be avoided by using common sense and tourers asking themselves if they will be interfering with others' use of the resort. Some of the resorts have discounted passes to help snowsport tourers get up or down and may be an attractive option for getting past the busy part of the resort.

As outlined in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, access rights exist only if exercised responsibly, and do not apply to land that has been developed or set out for a recreational purpose, whilst in use and where exercise of access rights would interfere with the recreational use intended for that land.

The 'Snowsports Touring, Mountaineering and Managed Resorts in Scotland' leaflet is available to download from www.mountaineering.scot/activities/snowsports-touring/code or as a hard copy from the office in Perth.

Manners and safety on the piste: five top tips.

1. **Walking up/down a piste.** This is dangerous. A downhill skier may not have the necessary skill to avoid you, particularly if the skier is a novice approaching at speed in poor visibility. In addition, you will leave a line of footprints in the snow which may be dangerous and unsightly for those who have paid to use the piste. **Stay off the piste when on foot.**
2. **Skinning up the piste.** It's downright rude, as well as posing a danger to yourself and downhill skiers. Either skin in single file off the side of the piste or if that is just not practical, keep as close to the edge as possible and go in single file.
3. **Walking or skinning up the line of an uplift facility.** Clearly when the lift is in use this is dangerous for you and the lift user. If the lift is not in use then skinning the line is acceptable, but walking is not.
4. **Freeloading on the uplift.** Blagging a lift, call it what you like, but that's no different to walking into your local outdoor store and stealing a jacket. Enough said.
5. **Dogs on the loose.** Dogs not under close control could cause injury or danger to the animal and/or downhill skiers.

Ends

Notes for editors:

Image: Ski mountaineering on a perfect day on Braeriach in the Cairngorms. Photo by Heather Morning.

http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/5_Ski_Mountaineering_-_Braeriach_-_by_Heather_Morning.JPG

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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 MCoS is a not for profit company limited by guarantee and incorporated in Scotland. Company number SC322717.
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