



Press Release

21 November 2016

For immediate release

Every day a school day in the Scottish mountains – even for the most experienced.

Scotland's mountains are a winter playground for thousands of hillwalkers, climbers and mountaineers, with a wide range of experience levels. And examination of the fatal accident statistics for the last year shows it isn't just novices getting into difficulties.

Sadly, 20 people have lost their lives so far in the mountains this year. Ten of these were either approaching, or on, a technical climb. Three died as a result of avalanche. Three of the others who died had literally spent a lifetime enjoying the hills.

With snow on the mountains, the Mountaineering Scotland reminds everyone heading out to enjoy the hills to pause, think and prepare for the challenges that face us all in winter.

Heather Morning, Mountain Safety Adviser with Mountaineering Scotland advises: "Shorter daylight hours, dropping temperatures and the first snow on the hill are all good indicators that it is time to think about extra kit in your rucksack. Routes will take longer than expected in winter conditions and many people will end up finishing in the dark – so a head torch – and spare batteries – is crucial. In fact better still is to carry a spare head torch – as anyone who has tried to change batteries in the cold and dark will testify!"

Heather continues: "If you are heading out on the higher tops, now is the time to add crampons, rigid boots to accommodate them, an ice axe and spare essentials such as hats and winter gloves to your essential kit list."

With temperatures at 1000m at least 10°C lower than sea level at this time of year – and feeling even lower through the effect of any wind chill – many underestimate how quickly they can feel the cold, which can turn to hypothermia within less than an hour. Extra layers are essential, such as a synthetic duvet jacket, and an emergency bivvi bag stored in the bottom of a rucksack is highly recommended, just in case you have to be stationary on the hill for any length of time.

Those who head to the hills with friends or as part of a group are advised to invest in a lightweight, nylon group shelter. This can provide a snug spot for lunch if the weather is poor and a vital refuge if someone in a group is injured and they have to wait for help to arrive.

Want to learn more?

Every winter Mountaineering Scotland reaches out to the wider mountaineering community; teaming up with outdoor shops across the country to offer a series of free winter mountain skills talks. 11 talks are held at venues from Inverness to Edinburgh, designed to give a taster of essential skills for novices and a refresher for seasoned mountaineers.

Heather explained: “We find that an effective way to get the message out to less experienced mountain lovers or those who want to progress from summer hillwalking to winter mountaineering, is to reach them through our free talks.

“Dealing with winter conditions and avalanche avoidance isn’t just a case of buying all the right gear: the right knowledge and experience is crucial.”

The Mountaineering Scotland also runs a number of subsidised winter mountain skills training courses, and provides further guidance and skills videos, together with details of free talks, on their website at www.mountaineering.scot/safety-and-skills

Ends

Notes for editors:

Images for this press release are downloadable here:

[http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/Heather Morning feb 2015.JPG](http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/Heather_Morning_feb_2015.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 MCofS is a membership organisation with over 13,000 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.
- Mountaineering Scotland is the new name for the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCofS), which acts to represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering.
- Mountaineering Council of Scotland remains the registered company name.
- The MCofS is a not for profit company limited by guarantee and incorporated in Scotland. Company number SC322717.
- Mountaineering Scotland, The Granary, West Mill Street, Perth PH1 5QP