

**British Mountaineering Council (BMC)
Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCofS)
Scottish Mountain Safety Forum (SMSF)**

PRESS RELEASE

Winter safety advice: prepare to enjoy

With Scotland's hills and mountains currently at their most beautiful and most challenging, mountaineering bodies today (21 February) have issued a joint safety reminder, emphasising the need for preparation before heading out into the mountains.

Whether you're out walking or attempting a technical climb, the presence of snow and ice adds an extra dimension to the risks and rewards of a day spent in our wildest environments.

The primary consideration of every expedition, whatever the season, should always be a safe return. But conditions in winter make particular demands: shorter days, low temperatures and conditions underfoot which can quickly alter.

Preparation is an essential component of every day on the hill, and especially in winter.

Preparation not only includes carrying the correct equipment – and knowing how to use it – but getting the latest weather forecast and checking the status of hazards like avalanche risk. It's essential also to assess whether the chosen activity is within the ability of all the party as well as the time available.

For many climbers and hill walkers, preparation is not just necessary but enjoyable. Preparing correctly displays the signs of thoughtful competence towards safe movement in the hills that is the mark of a good mountaineer.

Effective navigation, knowing when your limits have been reached and whether to turn back, are also extremely important. Turning back must not be considered a failure.

The benefits of recreation in the hills are numerous and widely recognised. Hill walkers and mountaineers find their lives are enriched by their experiences. These are best realised through planning and preparation, recognising all the challenges the journey may present.

The BMC, the MCofS and the SMSF continue to offer advice on good practice in the hills, acting as a resource for mountaineers and hill walkers of all standards to make their visit to the mountains as safe as possible.

General advice and information

www.thebmc.co.uk

www.mcofs.org.uk/mountain-safety.asp

Weather

www.mwis.org.uk

Avalanches

www.sais.gov.uk

Contacts / Comment

BMC Nick Colton 0161 438 3305

MCofS Heather Morning 01479 861241

SMSF Alfie Ingram 01382 668193

The British Mountaineering Council, Mountaineering Council of Scotland, and the Scottish Mountain Safety Forum very much regret the recent mountain tragedies, and extend their deepest condolences to the bereaved families.

More



The British Mountaineering Council (BMC) is the national representative body for hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers in England and Wales with over 75,000 members. The organisation promotes the interests of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers and the freedom to enjoy their activities. Through a democratic structure the BMC negotiates access improvements and promotes cliff and mountain conservation, promotes and advises on good practice, supports events and specialist programmes, as well as providing services and information for members. These include good practice courses, lectures and seminars, such as the Student Safety & good Practice Seminar, winter skills lectures, club training courses, and publications such as the Safety on Mountains booklet and DVDs such as Winter Essentials and Hill Walking Essentials. The BMC website also contains a vast amount of safety and skills information.

The BMC participation statement makes it clear to all participants that they should be aware of and accept the known risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

BMC : Nick Colton 0161 438 3305

www.thebmc.co.uk



The Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCoFS) is the recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers and ski-tourers who live in Scotland or who enjoy Scotland's mountains. The MCoFS supports the Mountain Weather Information Service and organises a range of safety initiatives, led by Heather Morning, Mountain Safety Advisor, including subsidised training courses for members and free safety lectures for the general public. The MCoFS website Mountain Safety section offers comprehensive guidance for mountaineers relating to skills and good practice. See <http://www.mcofs.org.uk/mountain-safety.asp>

MCoFS Safety Adviser : Heather Morning 01479 861241

www.mcofs.org.uk/mountain-safety.asp



The Scottish Mountain Safety Forum (SMSF) is the umbrella organisation concerned with promoting safe practice in outdoor environment activities, particularly in remote or challenging terrain in Scotland

The Forum has developed from the Scottish Mountain Safety Group which was established in 1998 to address the need for advising and promoting safe practice to recreational and others users of the mountain environment.

The SMSF represents a wide spectrum of organisations and is independently chaired by a representative drawn from one of one of the member organisations.

Chair : Alfie Ingram 01382 668193

ends