

Stirling University Mountaineering Club
Safety Regulations



“The University of Stirling Mountaineering Club recognises that climbing and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement”

1. General

- a) Each official meet of the club shall be under the control of a designated meet-leader whose responsibilities are:
 - b) To check that all club officials on the trip have a personal first-aid kit with them.
 - c) To ensure that sufficient ice-axes for every club member are taken along on those meets where snow conditions can be reasonably expected. (The meet-list shall indicate which members require axes.)
 - (i) To have a list of all those members on the meet.
 - (ii) To ensure that club members sign the route book as required.
 - (iii) To clearly define the required time of arrival back at the transport for return to base.
 - (iv) To check that everyone is safely off the hill each day, or accounted for at the end of the meet in the case of those members staying away from the main valley base.
 - (v) To account for everyone on the meet prior to returning to base.
 - (vi) To obtain a local weather forecast and check the location of local mountain rescue posts.
- d) Any trip using support of any kind from the Sports Union shall be considered an official meet.
- e) All members **MUST** sign the route-book before leaving the transport on day-meets or before leaving the hut, tent or hostel on longer meets. Details of route out and back must be given together with an estimated time of arrival and any anticipated alternatives in the case of bad weather, etc.

2. Basic Equipment

- a) All members must have a map and compass and know how to use them. An appreciation of the time factor involved in any proposed route and the

way this may be changed by prevalent conditions are very important. Advice given by the meet leader and other senior club members on the above must be heeded.

- b) Members must be suitably clad and shod in the light of the prevailing mountain conditions. A waterproof-windproof outer layer such as a cagoule and over trousers must also be carried.
- c) Members must always carry an item of spare warm clothing, a "survival" poly-bag or similar, a torch and personal first-aid kit (which minimally would comprise of a bandage/wound dressing and a few plasters), and a whistle and they should know the International Distress Signals.

INTERNATIONAL DISTRESS SIGNALS

- (i) blasts of a whistle**
- (ii) Six shouts**
- (iii) flashes of a torch**
- (iv) Pause for one minute**
- (v) Repeat six whistle blasts, shouts or flashes**
- (vi) Continue until answered by three whistle blasts, shouts or flashes, followed by three more after an interval of a minute; the answering signal is repeated several times.**
- (vii) When in distress do not exhaust yourself by shouting or blowing a whistle for too long a period - take a break and then start again when rested.**

3. Winter Requirements

- a) In addition to the above, and in view of the much more demanding conditions often encountered in the mountains in winter, which can make great demands on the standard of personal clothing and equipment, the following items become almost obligatory:

- Gaiters
- Gloves (preferably mitts)
- Hat
- Torch (preferably a head-torch)
- Complete water - or wind-proof outer layer
- Thermal underwear, long-johns etc.

- b) Every member must have an ice-axe and should be proficient in the basic skills of step-cutting and braking.
- c) The development of crampon skills is strongly advised as this greatly improves security in very firm conditions underfoot.

4. On the Mountains

- a) The pace of any walk should be reasonable for the slowest member of the party. No one should become detached from the group, and everyone should be aware of the procedures to be followed in the case of an accident.
- b) If any member of the group shows signs of exhaustion, particularly in worsening weather, the party should seek some shelter from the wind and wait for an improvement in conditions.
- c) No club member should be unaccompanied on the mountains.

5. Climbing

- a) There are winter and rock climbing instruction meets organised by the club. Every effort should be made to develop (and improve on) a safe and reliable belaying technique.
- b) Members must attend an indoor instruction or skills assessment before participating in outdoor climbing expeditions. Corporate instruction is available for all members on Wednesday afternoons or at other times by prior arrangement with the climbing officer.
- c) All climbers must tie-in with a re-threaded figure of 8 when climbing at group meetings; belaying must be carried out with a suitable belay device and all belayers must be competent as assessed by the climbing officer or by group consensus if the climbing officer is not available.
- d) When attending an outdoor climbing meet, everyone must wear a helmet at all times.
- e) Club members must not rock climb more than 4m off the ground on boulders, practice crags or walls without being roped.
- f) Bouldering without a bouldering mat is not permitted at club meetings.

6. General

- a) The designated meet leader will check the condition of club owned personal technical climbing equipment such as ropes, nuts, karabiners, cam devices, etc and ensure all participants are comfortable and proficient using club safety and protective equipment
- b) Members wishing to use their own protective equipment must check its condition prior to use and ensure it is fit for purpose.
- c) An appropriate descending device must be used for abseiling. Abseiling instruction is available from the club for all new members. Screw gate karabiners must be used throughout the system.
- d) Each club member must check with the designated meet leader that he/she is competent to take part in the proposed trip. Meet leaders must decide

whether members of the group have sufficient experience to take part in the trip.

- e) Club members, who in the opinion of the Safety Officer, are unable to cope with a particular trip to such an extent that they would be a hazard either to themselves or the rest of the group, will not be allowed to participate in that trip.

The above guidelines are at best a very brief indication of the more important aspects of mountain safety. The Mountaineering Club seeks to provide its members with the opportunity to enjoy the Scottish Hills in a variety of ways and weathers. Ultimately a sound mountaineering sense and judgement are required, gained only by the steady accumulation of knowledge, understanding, and experience.