

**Guidance for Those (Leaders, instructors, coaches and guides)  
Involved in Organised and Formal Led Walking, Scrambling & Climbing (Including indoor climbing  
and bouldering) Activities – Scotland.**

**Dated: 17/12/2021**

**BEYOND LEVEL 0 – overview**

**‘Give people space’**

**Scotland is currently in ‘Beyond level 0’ with a number of CV19 mitigating measures active, including:**

- maintain and promote good ventilation
- wear face coverings in indoor sport and leisure facilities when not taking part in physical activity
- keep your distance if you can - ‘give people space’ messaging
- use good hand and respiratory hygiene and surface cleaning
- stay at home and book a test if you develop coronavirus symptoms

When a local area is operating ‘Beyond Level 0’ it is recommended that the ‘Give people space’ messaging is promoted by mountain related activity providers and their staff.

**Test & Protect:** The Test and Protect system will remain in place to support contact tracing. People who are symptomatic or identified as close contacts should follow Scottish Government and NHS guidance on self-isolation available at [Scottish Government: Test & Protect](#) .

**IMPORTANT:** No one who is self-isolating should attend a sports facility or activity.

- Although restrictions are being eased Scottish Government will retain the option of putting in place local measures and travel restrictions to manage any future virus outbreaks.
- All organised activity should be overseen by a [COVID-19 Officer](#) and all providers of activity should ensure they have an appointed COVID-19 officer.
- Mountain Training Scotland has produced [COVID-19 Awareness and Mitigation](#) on-line learning resource. This course is designed to support MTS Providers, Course Directors and Course Staff deliver course within the COVID-19 restrictions. However much of what is covered will be useful for all Leaders, Instructors, Coaches and Guides as they deliver skills courses and guided days in the mountains and on the crags.

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### Beyond Level 0 Guidance for organised mountain-related activity

1. This document has been adapted from guidance produced by representatives from the British Mountain Guides (BMG) and the Association of Mountaineering Instructors (AMI). Our thanks to both these organisations for permission to use this as the basis for guidance for all those involved in positions of responsibility during formal led activity in mountain-related activity <sup>1</sup> i.e. leaders, instructors, coaches and guides (hereafter referred to generically as ‘leaders’).
2. These organized mountain-related activity technical guidelines should be read in parallel with the broader guidance for hillwalkers and climbers produced by Mountaineering Scotland and which can be found at this [LINK](#)
3. These guidelines recommend a minimum standard and individuals may wish themselves to apply more rigorous behaviours, or they may find themselves involved with, or working for organisations, whose operating procedures require it.
4. To ensure that it is safe to progress ‘Beyond Level 0’, guidance is being linked to the ‘Gateway condition’. This relates the amount of vaccine coverage to the Scottish Government’s new strategic intent to ‘suppress the virus at a level consistent with alleviating its harms’.
5. Most legal restrictions relating to Covid-19 will be lifted on the 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021 when Scotland moves to ‘Beyond Level 0’. This includes restrictions on physical distancing and the size of social gatherings. Additionally, no businesses will have to legally remain closed.
6. Whilst these changes will signal the end of most restrictions for sport and physical activity it will not however signal the end of the epidemic. Covid-19 is a disease that will need to be managed for the foreseeable future and to maintain progress in returning to more normality, it is important that people continue to abide by a set of baseline measures covered by Scottish Government guidance and where relevant legislation.

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase, ‘mountain-related’ is used throughout the text. This should be read as referring to all of the activities listed: hill and mountain walking, rock climbing and scrambling, bouldering, indoor climbing, winter climbing, mountaineering, Alpine mountaineering and ski mountaineering.

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### Health, Safety & Hygiene

#### 7. **Appoint a COVID-19 Officer**

8. All providers of mountain-related outdoor activity should ensure they have an appointed [COVID-19 officer](#) whose role it to ensure all appropriate management processes are in place so that they can effectively oversee and maintain the implementation of measures outlined herein. An e-learning module for COVID officers is available at [HERE](#).

9. Activity providers should consider the use of pre-course screening questionnaires.

#### 10. **Mitigating COVID transmission**

11. Mountain Training Scotland has produced [COVID-19 Awareness and Mitigation](#) on-line learning resource. All those involved in working with groups in the outdoors are advised to undertake this free course which will take 30 minutes and will help overall awareness of COVID19 and support outdoor professionals make informed decisions regarding their working practice.

#### 12. **Key Principles in CV-19 transmission**

13. The key considerations to be mindful of regarding CV-19 transmission, which is primarily an aerosol borne infection are:

- close contact (including geometry i.e. which direction your faces are pointing)
- length/duration of exposure
- contaminated shared surfaces (fomites)

14. So being face to face and close to someone (who could be asymptomatic) for more than ten minutes, and/or handling surfaces that have been touched by them raises the risk of infection.

15. Please continue to observe the following protection principles – they will help to mitigate the risk of infection to you and your participants:

- maintain and promote good ventilation
- wear [face coverings](#) in indoor sport and leisure facilities when not taking part in physical activity
- keep your distance if you can - apply and adhere to 'give people space' messaging
- use good hand and respiratory hygiene and surface cleaning
- stay at home and book a test if you develop coronavirus symptoms

16. Leaders and others supporting organised mountain-related activity should if possible, keep physically distant, but it is recognised that this will not always be possible to ensure the safety of participants. In such circumstances the responsible 'Covid Officer' should consider appropriate mitigating actions as part of the risk assessment.

#### 17. **Face Coverings**

18. Face coverings must be worn by coaches when **indoors**, except where an exemption applies. For instance:

- where an individual has a health condition or is disabled, including hidden disabilities, for example, autism, dementia or a learning disability.
- or if there is a reasonable excuse not to wear a face covering such as:
- where there is difficulty in communicating with participants who may not be close by and safety is an issue i.e., in a swimming lesson. In such cases alternative measures should be considered such as use of a face visor.

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- being physically active or exercising as part of the coached session.
  - The priority should be on ensuring the safety of the coach and participants and minimising the risk of virus transmission before, during and after activity.
19. The law says you must wear a face covering in most indoor public places including public transport. . This is a mandatory requirement except where an exemption applies, or where there is a ‘reasonable excuse’ not to wear a face covering e.g. if you have a health condition or are disabled, including hidden disabilities such as autism, dementia or a learning disability.
20. Be aware that face coverings discriminate against some deaf people who need to look at lips to help communicate. Staff in facilities should be made aware that it is okay to remove their face coverings to communicate with someone who relies on lip reading and facial expressions.
21. The [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): public use of face coverings](#) provides guidance on general use and exemptions.
22. Links to supporting guidance:  
[Health Protection Scotland: General guidance for non-healthcare settings](#)  
[Health Protection Scotland: Hand hygiene techniques](#)  
[HSE: First Aid during the coronavirus](#)

### Test & Protect

23. Contact tracing and testing of close contacts will continue as we move forward through the pandemic, including ‘Beyond Level 0’. Test & Protect will change as the population becomes more protected by vaccination but will still play a role in mitigating clusters and outbreaks where they arise.
24. It is a **mandatory requirement** that the individual/organisation running the session/event must keep a record of attendees for 21 days in accordance with the Scottish Government [Test and Protect](#) process.
25. This record must include the name, contact number, date of visit, time of arrival, and where possible the departure time of all those attending facilities or activities. Where attending as a small household group, the contact details for one member – a ‘lead member’ – will be sufficient.
26. In order to gather and store customer information securely, sports facility operators may need to be registered with the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). This will be the case if you are using an electronic system to gather and store data. If you are unsure whether you need to register, please contact the ICO via their helpline on 0303 123 1113 or visit [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).
27. NHS Scotland has launched a free mobile app to help with contact tracing efforts and slow the spread of COVID-19. For further information see [www.protect.scot](http://www.protect.scot).

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What should someone do if they have coronavirus symptoms?

28. People who are symptomatic or identified as close contacts should follow Scottish Government and NHS guidance on self-isolation available at [Scottish Government: Test & Protect](#). No one who is self-isolating should attend a sports facility or activity.
29. No one who is self-isolating should attend an organized mountain-related activity.

### Travel Restrictions

**‘Beyond Level 0’ no travel restrictions will be applicable, within or between areas in Scotland, which are not categorised under the protection level system.**

30. For details regarding specific travel restrictions related to local restrictions etc please see [TABLE A](#).

### Travelling safely

31. Current advice is you should not share a vehicle with anyone from another household, unless you absolutely have to. If you or your participants must travel, you should only do so with members of your own, or extended, household. Be mindful of potential honeypot paths, areas, and parking – be creative. Please reference the link below for further guidance and advice:

#### [Transport Scotland - how to travel safely](#)

When choosing venues please:

- Consider locations which can accommodate larger number of cars or where there are no anticipated parking challenges.
  - Keep to small groups of people at any one time
32. There may be occasions, such as the result of an accident or emergency, when there is no alternative but to travel with people out with your household. On such occasions, you should:
    - share the transport with the same people each time and limit the number of people in the vehicle to as few as possible, ideally no more than 2 (applies to adults and children aged 12 and over)
    - use the biggest vehicle available for car sharing purposes
    - occupants should sit as far apart as possible, ideally the passenger should sit in the back seat diagonally opposite the driver, aiming for 2 metre distancing between occupants
    - windows in the car should be opened as far as possible taking account of weather conditions to improve ventilation in the space
    - occupants in the car, including the driver, should wear a face covering provided it does not compromise driver safety in any way
    - occupants should perform hand hygiene before entering the vehicle and again on leaving the vehicle
    - occupants should avoid eating in the vehicle
    - passengers in the vehicle should minimise any surfaces touched
    - keep the volume of any music/radio to a minimum to prevent the need to raise voices in the car

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- the longer the journey, the higher the risk; keep journey times to the minimum feasible and do not linger in the vehicle before or after the journey itself where non-household members are car-sharing, the car must be cleaned regularly (at least daily) and particular attention should be paid to high risk touch points such as door handles, electronic buttons and seat belts. General purpose detergent is sufficient unless a symptomatic or confirmed case of COVID-19 has been in the vehicle in which case a disinfectant (e.g. chlorine-based product) should be used

### Indoor Climbing Activity

33. Indoor climbing facilities are open. The Association of British Climbing Walls has produced [guidelines for the reopening of Scottish climbing gym industry during physical distancing](#) based around this guidance. Reference [Table A](#) for what activity is possible under the various protection levels.
34. This guidance for indoor organised and formal led group activity does not reference a ‘bubble size’. Assuming indoor climbing activity is permitted within the prevailing protection level, organised formal led indoor climbing activity group size for each indoor climbing facility is dependent on the outcome of the facilities risk assessment (which will take into consideration the overall venue area/layout/ventilation capacity etc).
35. **Face coverings** must be worn by leaders when indoors, except where an [exemption](#) applies. Leaders and others supporting organised indoor climbing activity should if possible, keep physically distant, but it is recognised that this will not always be possible to ensure the safety of participants. In such circumstances the responsible ‘Covid Officer’ should consider appropriate mitigating actions as part of the risk assessment.
36. This webpage from ClimbScotland details [which climbing walls are open in Scotland](#) and their booking arrangements and customer information BUT please check with the wall regarding your plans prior to turning up with your course.

### Children’s Organised Mountain-Related Activity

37. For organised mountain-related activity group sizes please refer to [Table A](#).
38. Leaders, coaches and instructors working with children should familiarise themselves with the additional considerations developed by **Children 1<sup>st</sup>**: [Child Wellbeing and Protection Considerations](#). SportsScotland also offer [on-line training modules](#).

### Equality & Inclusion

39. Covid-19 is affecting everyone. But the impact of the pandemic is not being felt equally. Before the pandemic certain groups were less likely to participate in sport and physical activity. These groups are also the most at risk of worsening inequalities due to Covid-19:
  - Older people
  - Disabled people
  - Ethnic minorities
  - Women

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- People from deprived communities
40. The evidence emerging has clear implications for how we design and deliver sport and physical activity. Some key areas for consideration include;
  41. **Communication** – Digital exclusion is a key issue. With so many services and so much information moving online it risks worsening the health impacts of the pandemic. Consider thinking innovatively about the range of ways you can provide information to people about outdoor mountain-related activity.
  42. **Accessibility** – Accessibility of our environments is another key issue emerging from the pandemic. As outdoor activity resumes it's important to build understanding of people's specific accessibility needs around things like hygiene, physical distancing and face coverings so you can provide the best possible support to people to take part in outdoor mountain-related activity.
  43. **Anxiety, mental health and wellbeing** – The pandemic is leading to an increased risk of anxiety and mental ill-health for people who share all characteristics. It is known that outdoor activity can have significant benefits for people's mental health so it's vital that you continue to promote those benefits, so people are encouraged to get involved.
  44. **Confidence** - Confidence to return to sport is a big issue across all groups. It is known that some groups are at higher risk from Covid-19 than others (including some ethnic minorities, disabled people and households experiencing poverty). These groups may be even more nervous about returning to outdoor activity or starting to participate. They are also less likely to participate in outdoor activity in the first place, so please consider the need to give extra attention to their needs to help build their confidence.
  45. Where a participant with a disability requires functional support to enable their participation in physical activity and sport this can be provided without maintain physical distancing.
  46. This support can be provided by a coach or other individual. In such circumstance the responsible '[Covid Officer](#)' should consider appropriate mitigating actions as part of the risk assessment. For instance, providing appropriate PPE, limiting the number of participants an individual provides functional support to, limiting the duration spent in proximity, or a combination of actions.

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**Table A: Mountain-related Activity Protection Levels**

		Beyond Level 0	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
<b>OUTDOOR SPORT</b> <b>Organised outdoor mountain related activity</b>	<b>Overview</b>	No field of play bubble restrictions apply beyond Level 0, although limits on participation numbers at competition and events are applicable. For Levels 0-4 outdoor sporting 'field of play bubbles' apply for organised sport as noted below. At Levels 0-2 figures exclude coaches and support staff*. Multiple bubbles can be used for training, events, and competition if appropriate guidance, set out within this document, is followed. Indoor and outdoor stadium, or equivalent events/competitions, involving spectators are subject to relevant Scottish Government guidance.						Local training/competition only. U12s: max 30 including coaches. Over 12s/adults max 15 including coaches.
		<b>No bubble restrictions</b>  <b>Total Daily Limit:</b> As agreed with LA	<b>Maximum bubble size:</b> 500 participants* <b>Total Daily Limit:</b> 5000 participants	<b>Maximum bubble size:</b> 100 participants* <b>Total Daily Limit:</b> 1000 participants	<b>Maximum bubble size:</b> 50 participants* <b>Total Daily Limit:</b> 500 participants	<b>Maximum of 30</b> participants.		
	<b>Children &amp; Young people (u18 years)</b>	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact activity	Contact & non-contact sport permitted	Contact & non-contact sport permitted	Contact & non-contact sport permitted	Contact & non-contact sport permitted	<b>U12s: Contact sport permitted</b>  <b>12-17 years: Non-contact sport permitted</b>
<b>Adults (18+ years)</b>	Non-contact sport permitted <b>Contact sport prohibited</b>						<b>Non-contact sport permitted</b>  <b>Contact sport prohibited</b>	
<b>INDOOR SPORT</b> <b>Organised indoor climbing and bouldering.</b>	<b>Overview</b>	Organised indoor sport or physical activity should follow Scottish Government <a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): Safer Businesses and Workplaces</a> and sport specific <a href="#">SGB Guidance</a> . <b>'Group' activity</b> refers to adults, who take part in organised sport or physical activity, where the number of participants is larger than allowed under normal household rules. 'Individual exercise' refers to organised sport or physical activity which takes place within household rules i.e., 1:1 coaching. For further information see definitions within this guidance.						
	<b>Children &amp; Young people (u18 years)</b>	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport permitted	Contact & non-contact sport permitted	Contact & non-contact sport permitted	Contact & non-contact sport permitted	<b>Indoor sport prohibited:</b>  <b>Climbing walls, leisure Centres, gyms and other indoor sports facilities closed.</b>	
	<b>Adults (18+ years)</b>			Non-contact sport permitted <b>Contact sport prohibited</b>	Non-contact sport permitted <b>Contact sport prohibited</b>	Indoor <u>individual exercise only</u> ; 1 to 1 Coaching based on the 2 household rule with the instructor/coach being 1 household.  <b>No contact or non-contact group activity</b>		



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		Beyond Level 0	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>COACHING</b>	<b>Overview</b>	General guidance is available within this document for coaches, leaders, instructors and guides, <i>herein referred to as leaders</i> . In addition <a href="#">Getting Coaches Ready for Sport</a> provides a 4-stage approach/checklist to further support leaders to plan and deliver safe sessions.					
	<b>Indoor &amp; Outdoor coaching</b>	The local protection level in place for sport and physical activity will dictate what activity can be coached, indoors and outdoors and to whom in that area. See indoor / outdoor above for further information.  Leaders can take multiple indoor sessions per day, however the numbers allowed in each session will depend upon the protection level in place.					
<b>TRAVEL</b>	<b>Indoor / Outdoor Sport &amp; Physical Activity</b>	For further information please refer to <a href="#">Travel Guidance</a> within this document					
<b>OVERNIGHT STAYS</b>	<b>'Wild' Camping; Tourist accommodation</b>	'Wild camping' allowed in line with social mixing limits and Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC); Tourist accommodation open but must follow in-house socialising rules.	'Wild camping' allowed in line with social mixing limits and Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC); Tourist accommodation open but must follow in-house socialising rules.	'Wild camping' allowed in line with social mixing limits and SOAC; Tourist accommodation open but must follow in-house socialising rules.	'Wild camping' allowed in line with social mixing limits and SOAC; Tourist accommodation open but must follow in-house socialising rules.	'Wild camping' allowed in line with social mixing limits and SOAC; Tourist accommodation open but must follow in-house socialising rules.	Camping only within own LA and as part of organised mountain-related activity in line with continuing Level 4 restrictions and the SOAC; Accommodation only open for essential workers.
<b>WORKFORCE</b>	<b>Contractors &amp; Staff</b>	Sports facility operators must ensure that Scottish Government guidance on <a href="#">workforce planning in sport &amp; leisure facilities</a> is followed for contractors and staff and ensure existing health and safety advice is maintained and aligned. This should be detailed in the risk assessment.					
	<b>Meeting Rooms</b>	Although gym and leisure facilities can open up to Level 3, we would encourage providers to consider whether meetings and training must be completed in person or whether alternative approaches can be used. If it is essential that meetings and training takes place in person, <a href="#">Scottish Government guidance for general workplaces</a> must be followed and a risk assessment should be completed.					

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## Appendix A

### Useful links

Mountain Training Scotland	<a href="#"><u>COVID-19 Awareness and Mitigation</u></a> on-line learning resource.
Scottish Government	<a href="#"><u>Advice on Covid-19</u></a> <a href="#"><u>5 Level Protection System and what you can and cannot do</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Guidance on general use and exemptions regarding face coverings</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Stay at Home Guidance</u></a>
sportscotland	<a href="#"><u>Up to date guidance on sport advice</u></a>
Mountaineering Scotland	<a href="#"><u>Guidance for hill walkers &amp; climbers in Scotland undertaking personal activity</u></a>
Scottish Disability Sport	<a href="#"><u>Guidance for those with a disability participating in activity</u></a>
Transport Scotland	<a href="#"><u>Travelling Safely</u></a>
SAGE	<a href="#"><u>Advice on mitigation of transmission of SARS-CoV2</u></a>
Cleaning and care of Equipment:	<a href="#"><u>Cleaning PPE</u></a>
Healthcare Scotland	<a href="#"><u>Cleaning in non healthcare settings outside the home</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Hand hygiene</u></a>
Scottish Mountain Rescue	<a href="#"><u>Rescue and emergency procedures</u></a>
Resuscitation Council UK	<a href="#"><u>CPR Covid-19 statement</u></a>

### **DISCLAIMER**

*Neither Mountain Training Scotland, nor any contributor to the content of this guidance, shall be responsible for any loss or damage of any kind, which may arise from your use of or reliance on this guidance note.*

*Care has been taken over the accuracy of the content of this note but Mountain Training Scotland cannot guarantee that the information is up to date or reflects all relevant legal requirements.*

*We recommend that you obtain professional specialist technical and legal advice before taking, or refraining from, any action based on information contained in this note.*

**END**