

The Mountaineering Council of Scotland

Mountain and Hill Walking Advisory Group Remit

This remit was approved by the MCofS Board at their meeting on 26 August 2010.

a) Purpose

Outdoor activity is a rapidly growing pastime in Scotland with 5% of the adult (16+) population participating in hill walking alone. The MCofS intends to support this growth in outdoor pursuits through educating the general public that hill walking and climbing are not an elitist activities, but one's that with suitable skills can easily be accessed and enjoyed by many. It also intends to further enhance the enjoyment and safety of those already active in the outdoors through use of data from outdoor incidents to target skills areas for advancement.

b) Background

MCofS' strategic aims are to represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering and encompasses these three aims:

- Representing Scottish mountaineering concerning matters relating to mountain safety, skills and equipment, with the media, government agencies, other mountaineering and outdoor organisations.
- Supporting mountaineers through the promotion of safe practice and the use of appropriate skills, through published media, courses, events and lectures.
- Promoting mountaineering with the aim of encouraging and inspiring all to enjoy the health and well-being benefits offered by the mountains, through the provision of positive information and educational resources relating to skills and equipment.
- To promote the aims of the Active Nation initiative to improve the health and fitness of the population of Scotland.

Based on these priorities, a costed and resource planned annual operational plan is developed jointly by the MSA, the Director for Safety & Training, Director for Development and the Chief Officer, and submitted to the Board for approval. The achievement of the plan is monitored by the Board by reference to the operational plan.

c) Constitution of the Advisory Group

The Chair, as a Director of MCofS, is elected annually by the membership at general meetings and eligible for a four-year term of office. Membership of the Group includes representatives from other organisations including the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland; the National Outdoor Training Centre and / or the Association of Mountaineering Instructors; the Scottish Students' Mountain Safety Officer; other representatives of the professional mountaineering sector, and MCofS members with relevant skills and experience. Members of the Group are selected and invited by the Chair, who also determines the number of members of the Group.

Other organisations which have an interest in the work of the MSA receive papers and minutes, and include representatives of the Scottish Government (Sport and Games Legacy Division, Scottish Parliament); Mountain Leader Training Scotland; and the BMC Training Officer.

d) Advisory Group Remit

The remit of the group is to identify key areas where outdoor skills enhancement will lead to increased safety and enjoyment of the outdoors. Data from mountain incidents will drive appropriate skills and education courses and information, leading to improved self-reliance in the mountains and awareness of appropriate equipment for the variable conditions seen in the Scottish mountains. The group will also act to advise and support the Mountain Safety Advisor (MSA) and liaise with other organisations such as: Scottish Mountain Safety Forum (SMSF), Mountain Leader Training Scotland (MLTS), Mountain Leader Training UK (MLTUK), the BMC Training and Youth Committee, the BMC Technical Committee and the UK Search and Rescue Operators Group.

e) Other Relevant Organisations

i) Scottish Mountain Safety Forum (SMSF) see details on the MCofS website

<http://www.mcofs.org.uk/scottish-mountain-safety-forum.asp>

The SMSF is administered by the MCofS. The chair of MSSAG also chairs the SMSF. The SMSF meets a minimum of twice a year and the secretary is the MSA.

ii) Mountain Leader Training Scotland (MLTS)

Three members of MSSAG represent MCofS on the Board of MLTS and are directors of MLTS. One of these positions is held ex-officio by Chair of MSSAG and the other representatives are appointed from members of the committee at the Chair's discretion. The MLTS Board meets four times a year.

iii) Mountain Leader Training UK (MLTUK)

The Chair of MSSAG attends the full Board of MLTUK.

There are four meetings per year held, at a weekend, in each of the four home countries. The MLTUK Board meetings include representatives from the councils (BMC, MI and MCofS) and all the MLT boards.

iv) Other Organisations

The MSA represents MCofS at the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland, and is a paper member of the BMC Training and Youth Committee, the BMC Technical Committee and the UK Search and Rescue Operators Group.

f) MCofS Officer Responsibilities

The responsibility of the Mountain Safety Advisor (MSA) should be to keep the group members informed of the Operational Plan, develop, organise and deliver courses as required and act as secretary to the Advisory Group.

g) Advisory Group Responsibilities

Group members should follow the requirements of the two forms of contribution as below:

i) Requests for advice will be made by the Mountain Safety Advisor (MSA), as and when required. The members have the option to reply or not, depending on whether they feel

they have the necessary knowledge and understanding for their comments to be of assistance. All members should endeavour to respond as soon as practicably possible, or inform the MSA that they will be unable to respond, or offer a timescale in which they can respond. This is to ensure that work is not needlessly held up. Advice offered may be used in the way deemed most appropriate by the MSA and MCofS Board.

ii) Members may be appointed to represent the MCofS on external groups, organisations or by drafting responses to ongoing issues. Members are only representing MCofS where this has been agreed as necessary for the Operational Plan by the MSA and the MSSAG Chair. Where a member represents the MCofS as agreed, they should provide any date of meetings in advance and minutes and agendas to the MSA as they receive them. All written representations on behalf of the MCofS should be agreed with the MSA prior to being sent externally. If it has been agreed in advance that this will not be possible, then another person will be identified to cross-check before send out. Representatives are encouraged to discuss any issues with the MSA such that they can be supported in their role as representative, and in order to co-ordinate activities. Whenever representing MCofS, group members must make it clear to the external organisation or group that the member is representing MCofS, they must represent the interests of MCofS and follow the position statements. Where there is doubt about their meaning or applicability, or the group member has personal conflicting views, the group member should discuss this with the MSA or Chief Officer of MCofS before making statements on behalf of MCofS. Representatives will be offered reasonable expenses. Any extraordinary travel expenses should be agreed in advance or they cannot be guaranteed to be paid.

h) Mode of Functioning

Correspondence among the group will be by e-mail where possible. At least two (four?) meetings will be held per annum. Nominated representatives of the group will attend meetings detailed below as required.

- Scottish Mountain Safety Forum
- Mountain Leader Training UK, (MLTUK) board meeting
- MRCofS AGM and general committee meetings

For meetings, reasonable expenses will be offered in line with MCofS policy.