



Incident Report 2010

MOUNTAIN RESCUE COMMITTEE **OF** SCOTLAND



The Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland is a Registered Scottish Charity -Number SC015257 and is the representative and liaison organisation for Scottish Mountain Rescue.

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(Finalised 31st May 2011)

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The Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland would like to thank the Scottish Government and the Order of St John for their continued commitment and financial assistance to Scottish Mountain Rescue.



All enquires about the content of this report or any other matter associated with Incident Reporting should be directed to the MRCoFS Incident Statistics Officer, statistician@mrcofs.org



Introductory Comments

The information reported here is based on the new Incident Reporting System, which was agreed by the MRC of S in November 2009 and used from January 1st 2010. Apparent differences in the figures given for 2010 and previous years may, in part, be due to this change in the reporting system. Every attempt has been taken to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information given in this report.

The MRC of S Statistician is in the unique position of being able to see the pattern of incidents as the year progresses. As such, it is easy to be subjective rather than objective in drawing conclusions about mountain rescues in Scotland. Although the teams have provided a wealth of information and opinion on individual incidents the MRCofS has in this report, provided objective data only. The information given in this report should be examined in light of past reports and judgements based on information gleaned over a period of time. It should be noted that any interpretative comments made in this report are those of the MRCofS statistician only and do not represent a formal position from either the MRCofS Executive or the General Committee. Others may interpret the data differently.

Executive Summary

1. There were a total of 534 incidents in 2010 during which the combined resources of all MRTs and SARDAs expended around 26,600 hours. The number of incidents and time expenditure varies considerably across Police authorities and areas (SMC defined) within Scotland.
2. A total of 659 people were assisted of which 255 were injured and 45 died. Of these, only 16 people died in mountaineering incidents; the lowest number for over 30 years.
3. Following a period of rise in the number of incidents over the past 8 years, 2010 shows a small decrease in the number of times teams were called out.
4. The number of mountaineering incidents fell to 340 in 2010 compared to 402 in 2009. Mountaineering incidents are those involving Hill walkers, Climbers and Rock Scramblers in both summer and winter conditions.
5. The number of non-mountaineering incidents rose to 194 compared to 172 in 2009. This rise in the proportion of non mountaineering incidents (36%) is the highest ever reported. Non-mountaineering incidents include Snow and Water sports, Mountain Biking and missing persons and walkers in lowland, rural and urban areas. It also includes help provided by MRTs in extreme weather events, vehicle incidents and aircraft crashes.
6. Roughly Around one third of all non-mountaineering incidents were searches for vulnerable people reported missing. Across Scottish Police Authorities (whom call out MRT's to respond to Land based search and rescue incidents) the percentage of call-outs for some police authorities varies greatly. There were also a small number of incidents which were connected with community resilience activities.
7. Helicopters from the MOD or the MCA were used for 39% of all incidents. SARDA dog teams assisted in almost 20% of all incidents.
8. Summer Hill walking is responsible for more incidents than any other mountain activity.
9. The small number of rock climbing incidents is consistent with a general decrease across several years. This has been reported elsewhere (The Scottish Mountaineer, August, 2008).
10. The small number of incidents involving avalanches continues the downward trend of previous years, which has been reported elsewhere (Mountain Rescue, April, 2010).
11. One third of all mountaineering incidents result from a slip or trip.
12. The most common injuries are to the lower leg and this follows the pattern observed over many years.

Overall Statistics

The total number of incidents in 2010 was less than for 2009. The number of mountaineering incidents was less than 2009, but there were more non-mountaineering incidents. This reduced number of mountaineering incidents is mirrored by fewer injured people, fewer persons assisted and significantly fewer fatalities. It is worth noting that it is over 30 years since the annual number of fatalities was fewer than the total for 2010. The summary figures are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Mountaineering And Non-Mountaineering Figures For 2010 (Figures For 2009 Shown In Brackets)

Type of Incident	Incidents	Fatalities	Injured	People Assisted
Mountaineering	340 (402)	16 (27)	198 (228)	488 (560)
Non-	194 (172)	29 (58)	57 (30)	171 (157)
TOTAL	534 (558)	45 (85)	255 (258)	659 (717)

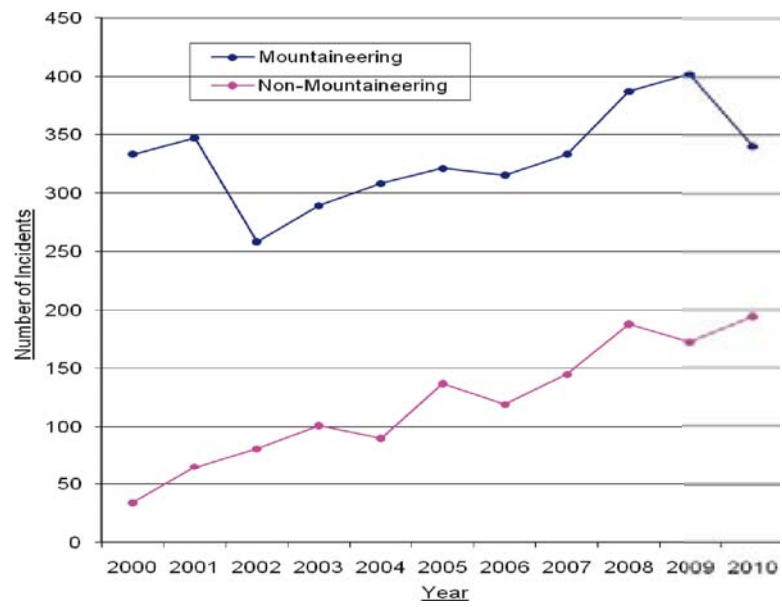
The last few years has seen an annual increase in the number of mountaineering incidents see (Figure 1 overleaf). It should be noted that the current level of mountaineering incidents is similar to that of the early 1990s. Non-mountaineering incidents also show increases across the years.

In 2010 there were 12 incidents classified as civil resilience (a new category), where teams provided assistance in, for example, extreme weather conditions. Mountain Rescue in Scotland is a key member of the emergency services and a valuable resource in the provision of civil resilience. The same applies in England and Wales. Figure 1 overleaf shows the trends in both mountaineering and non-mountaineering incidents across the last 11 years.





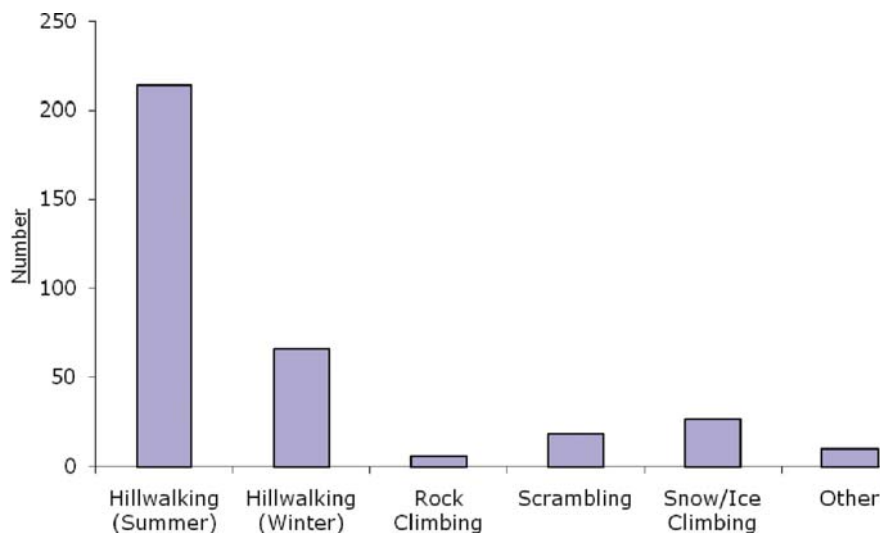
Figure 1: Trends In Mountaineering And Non-Mountaineering Incidents (2000-2010)



Mountaineering Activities

Figure 2 shows the number of incidents within each of the five mountaineering incident categories. As in previous years, hill walking in summer conditions is the most common activity and accounts for more incidents than all other categories put together. Rock Climbing contributes only a small number of incidents to the total. This is a continuing downward trend over the last few years.

Figure 2: Number Of Incidents In Each Mountaineering Activity



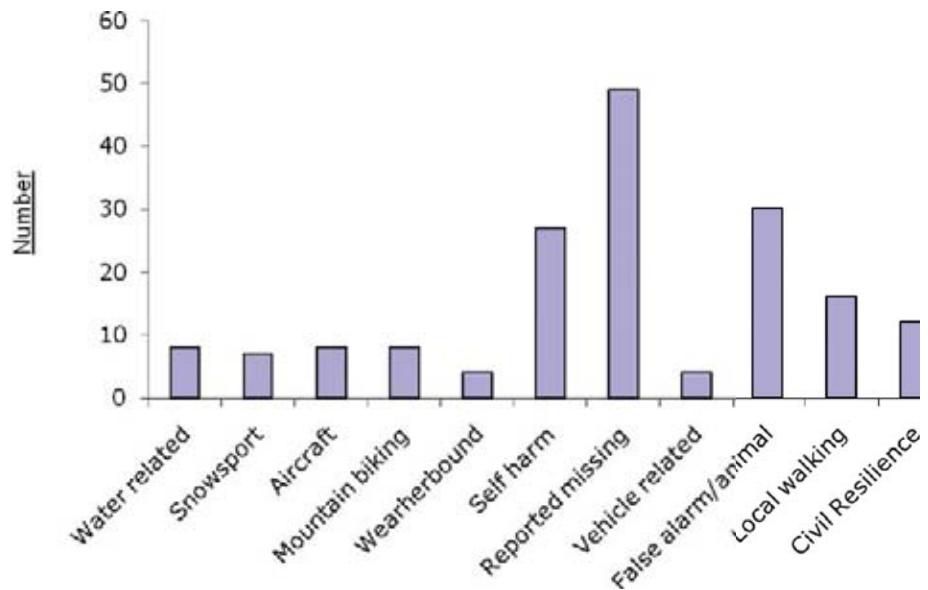
Non-Mountaineering Activities

The proportion of non-mountaineering incidents shows a year on year increase with most MRTs (Figure 1). In 2010 it was 36% of the total number. Across the teams the ratio of mountaineering to non-mountaineering incidents varied widely, from zero to 90% (Table 2) reflecting the different terrains in which teams operate.

For a number of years, MRC of S has split all incidents into mountaineering and non-mountaineering incidents. This represents a convenient distinction between the assistance teams were originally set up to provide, and the extra service they provide today.

Though these incidents are not directly related to mountaineering, they do occur in terrain or weather conditions in which MRTs are capable of operating. They included a wide variety of incidents. The most common were searches for people reported missing from home, care homes or hospitals (see Figure 3). There was a greater percentage of fatalities in non-mountaineering than in mountaineering incidents.

Figure 3: Number Of Incidents In Each Non-Mountaineering Category

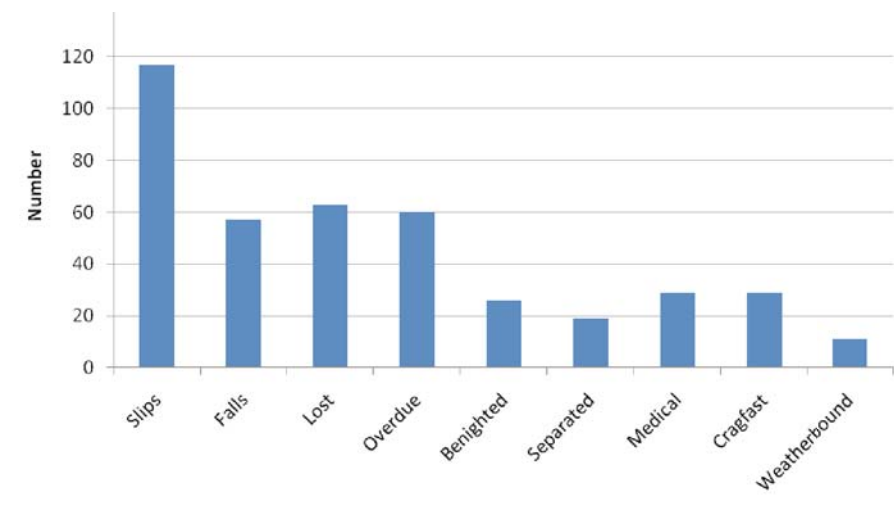


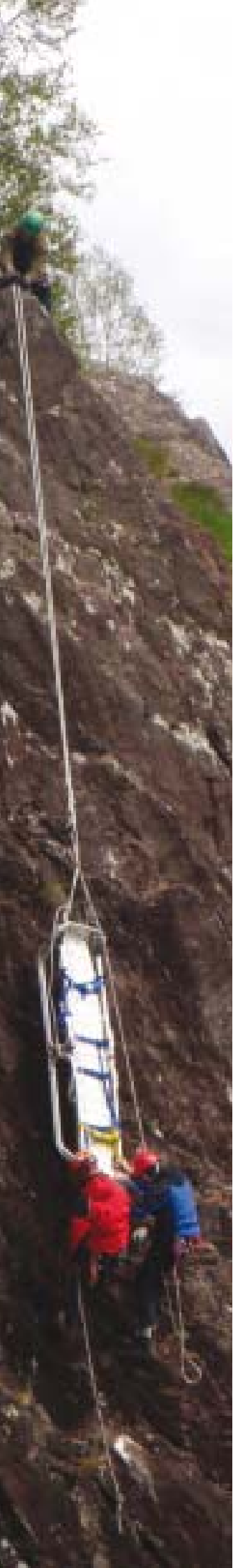
Causes Of Mountaineering Incidents

It is often difficult to assign a cause or causes to a single incident. If a hill walker slips on wet rock and dislocates their ankle, the answer is that they slipped. Their location means an MRT is needed to bring them down to the nearest road where they can be handed on to the Scottish Ambulance Service. In other cases, the answer is not straightforward. If a walker's body is located after they have fallen a considerable distance, the direct cause of the fall may not be obvious.

In their reports on individual incidents to the MRC of S, MRTs have identified a number of causes which contributed to their being called out. This is shown in Figure 4 below. This data is objective and does not include subjective issues such as ability and experience, or adequacy of footwear, clothing or equipment carried.

Figure 4: Main Causes Associated With Mountaineering Incidents



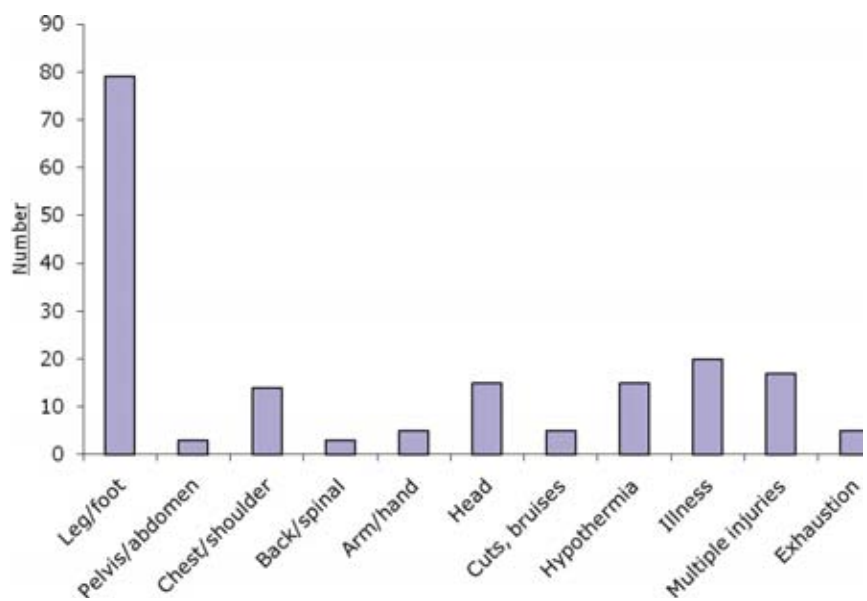


Injury/Illness Profile Of Those Injured In Mountaineering Incidents

Figure 5 shows the injury profile for those injured in mountaineering incidents in 2010. As in previous years, injuries to the leg and foot dominate the figures.

It should be noted here that, in contrast to previous years, there were no fatalities due to a medical condition (heart attack, stroke, etc.).

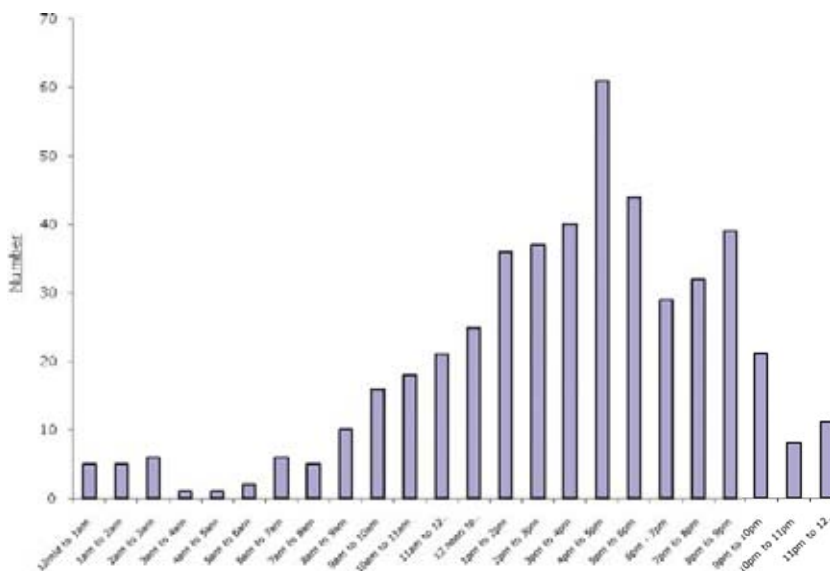
Figure 5: Types Of Injury Or Illness



Call Out Details

The majority of incidents (69%) were initiated from '999' calls from a mobile phone. 22% were via landline and 9% through other routes (e.g., visual contact on the mountainside). The most typical time of the day for call outs was late afternoon – 4pm to 5pm. Figure 6 shows the pattern of call out times across the day.

Figure 6: Number Of Callouts For Each Hour Of The Day

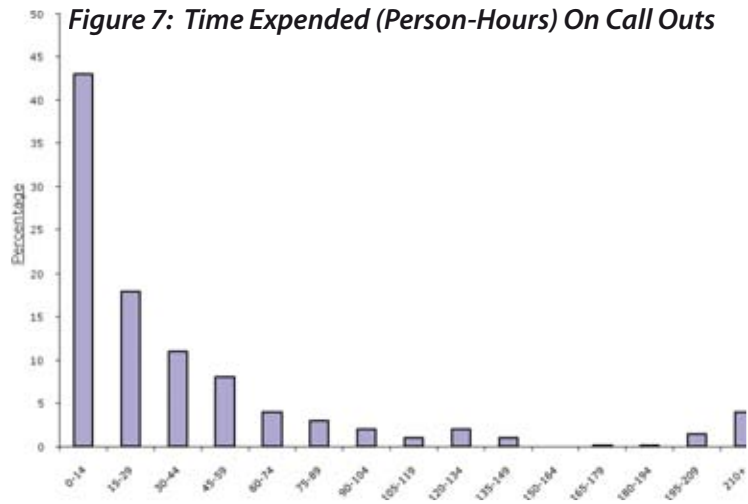


The number of 'person hours' expended on each incident varies considerably, dependant on the nature of the incident. The minimum was 1 hour and the maximum was 1181 hours. Typically, many incidents are of short duration: 43% are less than 15 hours. Figure 7 shows the overall pattern. The figures used were the total person hours per, taking into account incidents where one or more teams assisted another in the search or rescue.





Figure 7: Time Expended (Person-Hours) On Call Outs



Incidents By Team

There were a total of 534 incidents (340 mountaineering and 194 non-mountaineering) in 2010. On many occasions more than one MRT or other unit was called out to assist. Then total number of call outs was 789. Table 2 documents the total number of times MRTs and other units were called to assist in the 534 incidents, together with the combined number of person hours (e.g. a call out in which 12 people were deployed for 5 hours yields 60 person hours) and incidence of helicopter support (military, coastguard, police, ambulance and private). It should be noted that these figures in no way include the vast amount of additional time teams spend training, fundraising, administration and so on.

Table 2: Number Of Incidents Attended By Mrts And Other Units

Team	Incidents Attended	Proportion Non-Mountaineering	Hours Deployed	Helicopter Support
Aberdeen MRT	2	50%	47	100%
Arran MRT	15	40%	451	27%
Arrochar MRT	26	27%	1021	88%
Assynt MRT	14	36%	1100	57%
Borders SRU	17	88%	1426	41%
Braemar MRA	30	30%	718	47%
Cairngorm MRT	37	26%	930	57%
Dundonnell MRT	23	35%	899	39%
Galloway MRT	9	78%	579	33%
Glencoe MRT	72	15%	1754	28%
Glenelg MRT	5	0%	61	40%
Glenmore Lodge MRT	7	14%	88	29%
Killin MRT	30	23%	1416	50%
Kintail MRT	16	13%	445	44%
Lochaber MRT	57	0%	2122	58%
Lomond MRT	31	36%	678	35%
Moffat MRT	17	75%	736	18%
Oban MRT	35	34%	1642	54%
Ochils MRT	12	50%	436	17%
Skye MRT	22	9%	1159	45%
Tayside MRT	29	41%	1090	34%
Torridon MRT	16	13%	284	56%
Tweed Valley MRT	28	89%	1947	29%
Grampol MRT	33	27%	420	39%
Taypol SARU	32	50%	1061	28%
Strathpol MRT	34	47%	1543	50%
Kinloss MRT	13	15%	1000	92%
Leuchars MRT	8	67%	108	17%
SCRO	3	100%	104	0%
SARDA (Scotland)	65	57%	1010	-
SARDA (S Scotland)	51	61%	361	-
TOTAL	789	36%	26636	39%



Incidents By Police Authority

All mountain rescue assets are mobilised via a request from the Police. Every MRT is called out by one particular Police Authority. For example, there are 10 MRTs in Northern and three in Central. Table 3 provides summary information showing how MRTs responded in each of Scotland's Police Authorities. This provides a broad indicator about the extent of voluntary effort provide by Scotland's MRTs.

Table 3: Number Of Incidents, Etc. For Each Police Authority

Police Authority	Mountain Incidents	Non -Mountain Incidents	Total Incidents	Total Team Involvement	Helicopter Involvement	Person Hours
NORTHERN CONSTABULARY	211	40	251	286	45%	10282
GRAMPIAN POLICE	21	12	33	57	36%	1023
TAYSIDE POLICE	14	17	31	59	29%	2478
FIFE CONSTABULARY	0	10	10	10	0%	75
CENTRAL SCOTLAND POLICE	46	26	72	81	36%	2599
STRATHCLYDE POLICE	39	31	70	115	44%	4577
LOTHIAN AND BORDERS POLICE	39	4	43	50	28%	3843
DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY POLICE	5	19	24	27	17%	1330

Incidents By Smc Region

Traditionally, MRC of S Incident reports are published annually in the Journal of the Scottish Mountaineering Club (SMC). In this, incidents are divided into the regions as defined by the SMC District Guides. Table 4 provides details of the incidents in which people are involved, the number of people involved and the most common causes.

Table 4: Incident Information For Each Smc Region

Region	Mountaineering						Casualties			Major Contributory Factors					NM
	WALKING (SUMMER)	WALKING (WINTER)	SNOW/ICE CLIMBING	ROCK CLIMBING	SCRAMBLING	MOUNTAINEERING (Total)	PERSONS (INJURED)	PERSONS (FATAL)	TOTAL PERSONS ASSISTED	MEDICAL/ILLNESS	LOST	SLIPS/TRIPS/STUMBLES	OVERDUE/BENIGHTED	AVALANCHE	
NORTHERN HIGHLANDS	25	2	3	-	-	33	17	-	43	5	21	15	15	1	16
WESTERN HIGHLANDS	20	5	-	1	-	26	10	1	29	2	5	9	9	-	2
BEN NEVIS	30	5	8	-	4	47	32	5	73	8	11	15	14	2	2
GLENCOE	35	14	4	-	5	61	35	7	83	7	20	24	10	2	9
OTHER CENT HIGHLANDS	1	1	1	-	-	3	1	-	6	-	4	1	2	-	-
CAIRNGORMS	27	16	10	4	-	57	33	1	84	7	35	13	24	2	36
SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS	50	16	-	1	2	71	51	1	110	8	41	37	18	-	65
SKYE	10	1	-	-	6	19	8	1	16	-	10	7	8	-	3
OTHER ISLANDS	10	1	-	-	1	12	7	-	15	2	6	1	5	-	9
SOUTHERN UPLANDS	6	5	-	-	-	11	4	-	17	4	8	6	4	-	52
ALL REGIONS TOTALS	214	66	26	6	18	340	198	16	476	43	161	128	109	7	194

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