



MCofS News Release

26 October 2009

For immediate release

Hillwalkers and climbers: Are You Ready for Winter?

With the clocks having gone back this past weekend we will soon have winter upon us. Hillwalkers and climbers will be looking out their ice axe, crampons and headtorches, but it takes much more than this to be ready for winter. To help hillwalkers and climbers prepare for winter the MCofS (Mountaineering Council of Scotland) is providing a free Winter Safety programme.

The programme includes free Winter Safety Lectures and a range of webpages with comprehensive guidance on mountain safety in winter. In addition to this specific winter programme, the MCofS also funds the Mountain Weather Information Service, which operates throughout the year, but which provides a particularly vital resource for mountaineers in winter.

The MCofS Winter Safety programme can be found at:

<http://www.mcofs.org.uk/winter-safety.asp>.

The Mountain Weather Information Service can be found at: <http://www.mwis.org.uk/>.

MCofS also urges all mountain users to check the sportscotland Avalanche Information Service (SAIS), which provides daily reports on snow conditions and a forecast for the major climbing areas of Scotland. Their free daily reports are available at: <http://www.sais.gov.uk/> from December onwards.

MCofS Mountain Safety Adviser Heather Morning said: "Last year (2008) there were 387 mountain rescue call-outs in the Scottish mountains, of which 142 were in the winter season. There were also sadly a total of 20 fatalities during the year, 10 of which occurred during winter. Folk heading out onto the hills in winter should aim to take advantage of the advice and information on offer, to ensure a safe and enjoyable day on the hill." Heather went on to say: "As well as making sure you have an ice axe, and crampons that fit, remember that winter days are shorter and colder, so a headtorch with spare batteries is essential. A simple bivouac shelter is also a very good addition to the kit you carry in your winter rucksack."

MCofS Chief Officer David Gibson said: “The MCofS puts a lot of its resources into winter mountain safety education, and for good reason. Scotland’s mountains in winter can be incredibly beautiful and rewarding, but they can also be extremely hostile when the conditions turn rough; which they can do at a moments notice.”

MCofS President Chris Townsend said: “The winter safety advice on the MCofS website contains absolutely essential advice and the winter lecture series is a great way of picking up lots of useful tips and life-saving advice. I would urge all hill walkers and climbers to visit the MCofS website and check out the winter safety pages.”

The MCofS has secured sponsorship from Buff for the Winter Lecture Series <http://www.mcofs.org.uk/news.asp?s=2&id=MCS-N10357&nc=Mountain%20Safety>.

For further information contact Heather Morning at heather@mcofs.org.uk or go to the MCofS website at: <http://www.mcofs.org.uk>.

Ends

Notes for Editors:

The Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCofS) acts to represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering.

MCofS is a membership organisation with 10,500 members representing hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers, funded through a combination of membership subscriptions, grants, and investment from sportscotland, which supports public initiatives and services in mountain safety, mountain weather information services, mountain leader training and the development and promotion of mountaineering activities. MCofS is a not for profit company limited by guarantee and incorporated in Scotland. Company number SC322717.