



MCofS News Release

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For immediate release

Ten Tips for Hill Walkers and Climbers Now the Clocks Have Turned Back

The Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCofS) is urging hill walkers and climbers to take particular care with preparation when heading out to the hills during the winter months.

Our Ten Point Winter Check List comes as shorter days and adverse weather conditions require preparation for the potential problems that can arise on a winter day or night spent on the Scottish hills.

MCofS Chief Officer, David Gibson, says: “There is a poignant quote that goes: *Good judgement comes from experience. Experience comes from bad judgement.* Having considered a selection of typical winter pitfalls, the MCofS has developed a Winter Check List which we hope will help hill walkers and climbers to enhance their ability to make good judgements and return home safe from enjoyable days in the mountains.”

The MCofS ten point winter check list is:

1. Check your head torch and GPS batteries are in good condition, renew them if they're fading and always carry a spare set of batteries in your rucksack. Always check that everyone you go on the hill with has a head torch.
2. Carry a mobile phone whenever possible, but be aware that you won't always get reception in remote places. Register with the SMS Emergency Text Service by visiting www.emergencysms.org.uk.
3. Carry an emergency survival bag or bivvy shelter with you in winter.
4. Check that your crampons fit your boots before using them, and get into the habit of putting them on before you reach icy ground.
5. Carry your ice axe and know how to use it. Why not attend a [MCofS Winter Skills Course](#)?

6. Carry a big enough rucksack in winter. Using the same rucksack that you carry in summer is a recipe for an uncomfortable day when you are carrying extra winter kit.
7. Carry sufficient extra layers of clothing in winter. The temperature drops quickly as darkness falls and you should plan for unexpected delays and the possibility that you could be out on the hill for an extended period in the event of an incident.
8. Always check the [mountain weather forecast](#) before going out and be prepared to change your plans.
9. Always check the [sportscotland Avalanche Information Service](#) avalanche forecast and modify your route when the forecast indicates avalanche conditions on your planned route.
10. Know when to turn back: the summit is only the half-way point of your journey.

MCofS Mountain Safety Adviser, Heather Morning, said: “Now that the clocks have turned back it is time for anyone who goes out onto the Scottish hills in winter to give serious thought to preparing themselves and their kit for the season ahead. If there are one or two points in this list of ten that you hadn’t previously thought about then do something about it before your next trip to the hills.”

For further information contact Mike Dales on mike@mcofs.org.uk or go to the MCofS website at: <http://www.mcofs.org.uk/mountain-safety.asp>.

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Notes for Editors:

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

MCofS is a membership organisation with 11,000 members representing hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers, funded through a combination of membership subscriptions; non-governmental 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.