

**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: 28/5/2021

LOCAL PROTECTION MEASURES IN SCOTLAND – overview

From 21 May, mainland Scotland and some islands (Skye and some southern islands) will remain at Level 2.

The three island local authorities, the Highland islands (other than Skye), and some Argyll islands are at level 1.

Glasgow will remain at Level 3.

‘Close contact’ activity/‘field of play’ now permitted for over 18s participating in organised outdoor mountain-related activity in those local authority areas in Level 0-2 only.

Travel to or from a Level 3 area to attend a Mountain Training qualification course (training or assessment) is covered as a reasonable excuse under ‘education and training’.

- Scottish Government’s [strategic framework document \(version: Feb 2021\)](#) for managing COVID-19 provides a 0-4 Level approach to restrictions with each local authority area (or sub-area) placed in a relevant protection Level depending upon its COVID-19 status which will be reviewed weekly.
- ‘Organised sporting or physical activity’ refers to activities where the number of participants is larger than allowed under normal household rules, and which are undertaken in a structured and managed way following specific rules and guidance of relevant SGBs, local authorities or businesses who in turn have fully applied related Scottish Government and sportsScotland guidance.
- For the purpose of this guidance Mountain Training qualification courses (but not personal skills training courses) for travel purposes are classed as ‘education and training’. Travelling to deliver these courses is classed as ‘work’.
- 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 with documented risk assessments undertaken and mitigating actions put in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of participants (including Test and Protect requirements), and staff (or contractors) leading the activity .

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ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

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 ¹ i.e. leaders, instructors, coaches and guides (hereafter referred to generically as 'leaders') in the wider walking, scrambling and climbing communities.
2. 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.
3. The guidelines from Scottish Government and **sportsScotland**, along with those from sports' governing bodies (SGBs) will continue to evolve. Please accept this working document as practical advice, helping you create the safest environment that you can when practicing formal led mountain related activities with others during this time.

Leaders, Instructors, Coaches and Guides – activity requirements overview

4. Leaders, Instructors, Coaches and Guides (hereafter referred to generically as 'leaders') can work outdoors, providing all activity is consistent with current Scottish Government guidance on travel, health, physical distancing and hygiene – they should be aware that [local restrictions](#) may be in place for sport and physical activity and this should be considered as part of risk assessment planning and will dictate what activity can be coached, indoors and outdoors and to whom. See [Table A](#) for information on what organised mountain-related activity is allowed at each Level and [Table B](#) for what travel is permitted. **NOTE: For those areas covered by Level 4 the guidance in [Appendix B](#) supersedes all other guidance.**
5. Up to date guidance for sport can be found on the [sportsScotland website](#) .
6. For mountain-related personal activity advice please see the [Mountaineering Scotland guidance](#).
7. In addition, they should refer to their specific professional association guidance on good practice during this phase of the Scottish Government route map:
 - [Mountain Training Association](#)
 - [Association of Mountaineering Instructors](#)
 - [British Mountain Guides](#)
 - [Association of British Climbing Walls](#)
8. All exercise taken must be consistent with current Scottish Government guidance on health, physical distancing, hygiene and travel. Everyone should recognise that there may be a need to adapt to changes in guidance at short notice.

¹ 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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9. Up to date information on Scottish Government’s approach to managing COVID-19 is available at www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19
10. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with any updated Scottish Government guidance on [health, physical distancing, hygiene and travel](#).

Leaders safe return to work.

11. At all times leaders should:
 12. be aware they may have experienced a decline in their ability or proficiency caused by a period of non-use. This is sometimes referred to as “skill fade”.
 13. plan and risk assess appropriately for the session in advance, be aware of responsibilities, be clear on expectations with participants and build in a review period to reflect on effectiveness and safety of the session.
 14. equipment stored, unused for long periods of time should be checked for damage or deterioration, particularly if it has been stored in a place where there is a possibility of water ingress or rodent infestation. Ensure this is done before use.
 15. check, in advance of delivery, that appropriate insurance policies are in place for all organised activities and that their insurance is valid for the activities they plan to deliver.
 16. find out about their direct and surrounding delivery environment in advance of the session. External locations that were regularly used prior to the pandemic might have changed, e.g. there could be changes due to rock falls, growth of vegetation etc. Prior to offering activities, leaders might consider re-visiting the sites they use and determine whether their risk assessment or operating procedures need to change.
 17. Coaches working with children should familiarise themselves with the additional considerations developed by Children 1st: [Child Wellbeing and Protection Considerations](#). SportsScotland also offer [on-line training modules](#)
 18. Additional support tools are available for coaches and volunteers at the Getting Coaches Ready for Sport section of the sportsScotland website including mental health and wellbeing awareness training

Protection levels in local authority areas in Scotland - overview

19. This [LINK](#) below gives an overview of the general situation in Scotland and has a [post code checker](#) so you can check what the guidance is in a specific local authority area. See [Table A](#) for information on what organised mountain-related activity is allowed at each Level and [Table B](#) for what travel is permitted. **NOTE: For those areas covered by Level 4 ‘Stay at Home’ the guidance in [Appendix B](#) supersedes all other guidance.**
20. If you live or work anywhere where there are protective measures in place – at whatever level – you should not travel to another area to avoid them. For details regarding specific travel restrictions and guidance reference [Section 34 Travel Guidance](#). **NOTE: For those areas covered by the Level 4 ‘Stay at Home’ the guidance in [Appendix B](#) supersedes all other guidance.**

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Table A: Mountain-related Activity Protection Levels

		Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
OUTDOOR SPORT Organised outdoor mountain related activity	Overview	An outdoor sporting 'field of play bubble' can operate for organised sport with maximum numbers noted below. At Levels 0-2 figures exclude coaches, officials, and other 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 and approval. Any variation to these numbers must be approved by Scottish Government directly.				Local training/competition only. U12s: max 30 including coaches. Over 12s/adults max 15 including coaches.
		Maximum bubble size: 500 participants* Total Daily Limit: No limit	Maximum bubble size: 100 participants* Total Daily Limit: 1000 participants	Maximum bubble size: 50 participants* Total Daily Limit: 500 participants	Maximum of 30 participants.	
	Children & Young people (u18 years)	Contact & non-contact activity	Contact & non-contact sport permitted	Contact & non-contact sport permitted	Contact & non-contact sport permitted	U12s: Contact sport permitted 12-17 years: Non-contact sport permitted
Adults (18+ years)	Non-contact sport permitted Contact sport prohibited				Non-contact sport permitted Contact sport prohibited	
INDOOR SPORT Organised indoor climbing and bouldering.	Overview	The number of participants allowed to take part in organised indoor sport or physical activity should follow Scottish Government guidance on the opening of sport and leisure facilities and sport specific SGB Guidance . ' Group ' activity refers to young people and adults, who take part in organised formal led indoor climbing activity, where the number of participants is larger than allowed under normal household rules. 'Individual exercise' under Level 3 refers to organised formal led activity which takes place within household rules i.e. 1:1 coaching. For further information see definitions within this guidance.				
	Children & Young people (u18 years)	Contact & non-contact sport permitted	Contact & non-contact sport permitted	Contact & non-contact sport permitted	Contact & non-contact sport permitted	Indoor sport prohibited: Climbing walls, leisure Centres, gyms and other indoor sports facilities closed.
	Adults (18+ years)		Non-contact sport permitted Contact sport prohibited	Non-contact sport permitted Contact sport prohibited	Indoor individual exercise only; 1 to 1 Coaching based on the 2 household rule with the instructor/coach being 1 household. No contact or non-contact group activity	

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		Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
COACHING	Overview	General guidance is available within this document for coaches, leaders, instructors and guides, <i>herein referred to as leaders</i> . In addition Getting Coaches Ready for Sport provides a 4-stage approach/checklist to further support leaders to plan and deliver safe sessions.				
	Indoor & Outdoor coaching	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.				
TRAVEL	Indoor / Outdoor Sport & Physical Activity	For further information please refer to Travel Guidance within this document. The regulations permit travel to or from a Level 3 area if you have a reasonable excuse. They also let you travel through a Level 3 area to somewhere else. In doing so you should take additional care, especially if travelling by public transport and minimise contact with others. Travel to or from a Level 3 area to attend a Mountain Training qualification course (training or assessment) is covered as a reasonable excuse under 'education and training'.				
OVERNIGHT STAYS	'Wild' Camping; Tourist accommodation	'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.
WORKFORCE	Contractors & Staff	Sports facility operators must ensure that Scottish Government guidance on workforce planning in sport & leisure facilities 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.				
	Meeting Rooms	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, Scottish Government guidance for general workplaces must be followed and a risk assessment should be completed.				

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Leaders – CV19 mitigation measures overview

21. Mitigating COVID transmission

Current Scottish Government advice is based around **F.A.C.T.S.**

- Face coverings.
- Avoid crowded places.
- Clean hands regularly.
- Two metre distance.
- Self-isolate (10 days) and book a test if you have symptoms.

22. Key Principles in CV-19 transmission

The key considerations to be mindful of regarding CV-19 transmission are:

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

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.

23. Face Coverings

24. Providers should ensure participants and visitors wear face coverings, if indoors, before and after activity or when in non-playing areas of the facility. For example: reception, locker rooms and storage areas. 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.
25. 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.
26. The [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): public use of face coverings](#) provides guidance on general use and exemptions.
27. 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](#)

28. Appoint a COVID-19 Officer

29. 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](#).

30. Test and Protect

31. 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.
32. 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.

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- 33. 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.
- 34. 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.

What should someone do if they have coronavirus symptoms?

- 35. If a person has a continuous cough, high temperature, or loss or change in taste or smell, they should self-isolate and request a coronavirus test right away. Further information is available at [NHS inform: Get a Test](#) or by calling **0800 028 2816** if they cannot get online.
- 36. **IMPORTANT: People who are self-isolating should not attend a sports facility or activity.**

Travel Guidance

- 37. Travel guidance outlined by the Scottish Government should always be followed. Travel is covered by local protection level restrictions. [Table B](#) provides an overview of permitted travel. Further information on what travel is permitted is available at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on travel and transport](#). **NOTE: For those local authority areas covered by Level 4 the guidance in [Appendix B](#) supersedes all other guidance.**
- 38. Whether to make your journey is a judgment you must make for yourself. The guidance below is to support you in making that decision. You should be aware that in the unlikely event of being stopped by Police Scotland you may be asked to produce evidence as to why you deem your journey essential. MTS suggest carrying both evidence of work/course commitments and your professional association membership card. If anyone runs into difficulty with Police Scotland in this regard, please contact Mountain Training Scotland.

Table B: Travel Restrictions (Organised mountain-related activity)

Age Group	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
U18s	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
18+ (Adults)	✓	✓	✓	Local Travel Only *	Local Travel Only

- For qualification courses see Table A and section 49

Travel guidance for mountain-related activity providers and staff

- 39. Essential travel for work within the context of this guidance covers those staff (instructor, leader, coach or guide) travelling to deliver qualification (including Mountain Training qualifications), personal skills training, or CPD type events within Level 0-4 areas.

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40. Providers/staff may also travel into or out of all areas, including Level 3 and 4 areas, to deliver qualifications and formally organised mountain-related activity.
41. For staff who travel to deliver mountain-related activity please follow the guidance on [travelling safely](#).

Travel guidance for participants² in organised outdoor mountain-related activity.

Children & Young People (17 years or under)

42. Participants aged **17 years or under** can travel to and from Level 0, 1, 2 and 3 areas to take part in organised outdoor mountain-related activity.
43. Children and young people may travel (but no further than necessary) to or from a Level 4 area for organised outdoor mountain-related activity as outlined in [Table A](#). But they should travel no further than they need to. If attending a sport/activity in a Level 3 area or below, Level 4 guidance will apply to the whole activity e.g. 12 to 17-year-old outdoor organised mountain-related activity should be restricted to non-contact and include a maximum of 15 participants.
44. With regard to Section 36-38 Parents can drive under 18s outside their local authority area for their regular organised group activity. NOTE: parents should still follow household size guidance if not part of the organised activity.

Adults (18 years or over)

45. Participants aged **18 years or over** can travel to and from Level 0, 1 and 2 areas (but not Level 3 or 4) to take part in **organised outdoor mountain-related activity** as outlined in [Table A](#).
46. Adults living in a Level 3 area should only travel locally or to another Level 3 area to take part in **organised outdoor mountain-related activity** as outlined in [Table A](#). (from 26 April 2021)
47. Adults living in a Level 4 area should only travel locally to take to take part in **organised mountain-related activity**.

Travel into or out of level 3 areas to attend Mountain Training qualification courses

48. The regulations permit travel to or from a Level 3 area if you have a reasonable excuse. They also let you travel through a Level 3 area to somewhere else. In doing so you should take additional care, especially if travelling by public transport and minimise contact with others. Travel to or from a Level 3 area to attend a Mountain Training qualification course (training or assessment) is covered as a reasonable excuse under 'education and training'.

Travelling safely

49. 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.
 - Consider locations which can accommodate larger number of cars or where there are no anticipated

² Participants are those who have booked onto an organised outdoor mountain-related activity event (e.g. a Mountain Training course, a guided experience, personal skills training etc).

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parking challenges.

- Keep to small groups of people at any one time
50. 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
 - maintain good ventilation by keeping the car windows open if possible
 - consider asking everyone to wear [face-coverings](#)
 - clean your hands before and after your journey
 - if the vehicle is your responsibility, clean the door handles and other areas that people touch.
 - The driver keeps note of details those of who have travelled together

[Scottish Government - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on travel and transport](#)

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

General Guidance across all organised outdoor mountain-related activities

51. Providers of outdoor mountain-related activity are advised to ensure that their joining information signposts participants to the Scottish Government postcode checker to check their local area protection level and what restrictions are in force.
52. Information relating to organized mountain-related activity that can be undertaken by protection level and age group is available in [Table A](#). Note: For those Level 4 areas the guidance in [Appendix B](#) supersedes all other travel and group size guidance in this document.
53. 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](#)
54. Physical distancing, hygiene and risk management will all be aided by participating/working with low ratios in all activities. Coaches and others supporting organised sporting or physical activity should attempt to 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.
55. At the beginning of any activities no-one involved should be in a position where they need to self-isolate either because of personal symptoms or contact with others. Those involved in working with others in a formal capacity should consider the use of pre-course screening questionnaires.
56. Operate comfortably within your and other members of the party's abilities/fitness levels and in optimum conditions.
57. Planning sessions are done online or outdoors (physical distancing).
58. Avoid sharing and all participants ensure they supply their own:

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- Drink, lunch and snacks.
- Face coverings (including spares) and hand sanitizer.
- Basic first aid kits – appropriate protective gloves, blister kits, plasters alcoholic wipes etc. Note: those in positions of responsibility should have a sealed communal first aid kit.
- Sun glasses, sun cream, goggles etc.
- Outdoor clothing appropriate for any conditions.
- Specialist equipment if possible (map/compass for mountain days, harnesses, helmets, boots for climbing etc.) Note: If not possible and equipment is supplied then please follow manufacturers guidance on cleaning.

Outdoor ‘sporting bubbles’ for organised mountain-related activity (Levels 0-3)

59. Providers/Leaders can run organised outdoor mountain-related activity using an outdoor sporting ‘field of play bubble’, including multiple bubbles, up to the limits noted below. Leaders, assistants/observers, and volunteers are not included in Level 0 to Level 2 bubble/participation numbers but are at Level 3. Support staff numbers should be limited to those that are required to ensure a safe, well run activity:
- Level 3 – Bubbles of up to 30 with a maximum of 200 participants per day
 - Level 2 – Bubbles of up to 50 with a maximum of 500 participants per day
 - Level 1 – Bubbles of up to 100 with a maximum of 1000 participants per day
 - Level 0 – Bubbles of up to 500 with no participant limit per day
60. Providers and leaders should undertake comprehensive risk assessment to minimise the risk of movement or contact between bubbles (or waves) including before, during or after an activity. Once an individual has completed their activity, they should immediately vacate the ‘field of play’ and are then subject to household rules.
61. Providers of organized mountain-related activity should note that the situation around COVID-19 is fluid and activities may need to be cancelled at short notice should there be a change in local or national restrictions. In such circumstance’s plans should be in place to notify participants of event cancellation and to ensure they do not attend the venue.
62. Where a person requires the support of a carer to undertake outdoor organised mountain-related activity safely, the carer will not be counted in the bubble total. In such circumstances the Covid Officer should risk assess and where required take additional precautions to minimise risk. For instance, the carers may wear, if appropriate, personal protective equipment (PPE) such as face masks during the activity.

Outdoor sporting bubbles for localised organised mountain-related activity (Level 4)

63. See [Appendix B](#) for detailed information on Level 4 restrictions.

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Hygiene, Medical and First Aid

64. Cleaning of equipment, hand and respiratory hygiene are core measures to be implemented and provision should be made for these.
65. Be aware that disabled people may face greater challenges implementing regular handwashing because of additional support needs. Some disabled people may need to use touch to help them get information from their environment and physical support. It is important they are not prevented from doing this, but you should be aware that this increases the likelihood of virus transmission.
66. All participants should understand rescue procedures in the event of an accident, including the requirement for increased self-reliance as a party, owing to limitations placed on [Scottish Mountain Rescue](#) services at present.
67. Participants need to take ownership of any personal medical conditions/injuries and all involved in the activity need to be more considerate of these conditions/injuries allowing for more of a safety net when planning a day.
68. Ensure access to first aid and emergency equipment is maintained, and that it has been updated appropriately for the COVID-19 pandemic and first aiders have appropriate training.

Equipment

69. Participants should ensure that their own clothing and all equipment used or provided has been cleaned and/or quarantined and stored appropriately since the last use.
70. All communal kit should be labelled as when last cleaned and so ready for the day.
71. Where equipment is loaned or rented it should be issued at the beginning of the day and remain in the participant's possession all day. At the end of the day it should be sealed in a plastic bag until it can be cleaned appropriately. [covid-19-links-and-resources-for-equipment-owners-and-managers](#)

What is Close Contact Activity?

72. Some specific outdoor mountain related activities have situations where **close contact**³, at key moments when the activity is being undertaken, is unavoidable and physical distancing not possible. **NOTE: when 'close contact' is allowed is covered by local measure restrictions.**
73. These generally involve the participants undertaking a process (which can be complex and may often be done under conditions of duress) that is essential to the safe conduct of the activity or dealing with an unforeseen safety critical event.
74. For adults and young people over 12 the following principles apply during close contact (field of play) are:
 - Contact is kept as brief and as dynamic as possible.
 - If this is not possible, keep those coming into contact to small numbers and ensure all participants

³ Contact sport or activity is defined as “a sport or activity in which the participants necessarily come into bodily contact with one another”

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involved wear face coverings.

- As soon as practicably possible resume physical distancing.
- Good hand hygiene pre- and post-contact.

75. Those leading formal led activity should consider introducing a period of ‘contact training’ to familiarise participants with their specific ‘close contact’ guidelines before undertaking activity.

Indoor Climbing Activity

76. Indoor climbing facilities can open only in Level 0-3 protection areas if [Scottish Government Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Guidance for the opening of indoor and outdoor sport and leisure facilities](#) is fully implemented. 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.

77. Organised formal led indoor climbing group activity for 18yrs and over is possible at Levels 0-2, as a non-contact sport activity (Not permitted at Level 3).

78. Organised formal led indoor climbing group activity for 17yrs and under is possible at Level 0-3, as a non-contact sport activity.

79. 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). Theoretically a climbing facility could allow organised formal led group sizes that applied pre-covid.

80. Indoor climbing activity (lead climbing; top/bottom roping; and bouldering) due to the relatively unconstrained physical environment can be classed as **non-contact activity**⁴ as the participants do not have to make close contact to undertake the activity. Likewise, bouldering (carried out in line with modern good practice minimising close contact activities such as spotting). During these activities physical distancing is the default with the coach / instructor/ leader maintaining 2m between themselves and the participants.

81. It is recognised that unforeseen safety critical situations may and can occur at key moments when the activity is being undertaken, and physical distancing is momentarily not possible whilst the person supervising intervenes. Such events are more likely with inexperienced or novice climbers. To minimise the probability of such events occurring and the need for such interventions, those leading the activity should ensure they risk assess the activity and ensure appropriate mitigating strategies are implemented.

82. 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.

⁴ Non-contact sport or activity is defined as “a sport or activity in which the participants are physically separated by playing rules such as to make it difficult for them to make physical contact during an activity.

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Children’s Organised Mountain-Related Activity

83. For organised mountain-related activity group sizes please refer to [Table A](#).
84. All organisations providing children’s activity must abide by relevant **sportsScotland** and Scottish Government guidance. They should have a named ‘[COVID Officer](#)’ who will complete documented risk assessments and ensure all appropriate mitigations are put in place by the sports organisation before any children’s outdoor activity is undertaken.
85. Children aged under 12 are not required to physically distance, as set out in Scottish Government guidance.
86. Coaches, leaders, instructors and other adults supporting organised activity should attempt to keep physically distant where possible, but it is recognised that this will not always be possible. In such circumstances the ‘[COVID Officer](#)’ should consider appropriate mitigating actions as part of the risk assessment.
87. Leaders, coaches and instructors working with children should familiarise themselves with the additional considerations developed by **Children 1st**: [Child Wellbeing and Protection Considerations](#). SportsScotland also offer [on-line training modules](#).
88. Where an employee is providing an activity, relevant workplace risk assessments and consultation should take place in advance of any activity being undertaken.

Equality & Inclusion

89. 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
 - People from deprived communities
90. The evidence emerging has clear implications for how we design and deliver sport and physical activity. Some key areas for consideration include;
 91. **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.
 92. **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.

**Guidance for Those (Leaders, instructors, coaches and guides)
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and bouldering) Activities – Scotland.**

93. **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.
94. **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.
95. 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.
96. 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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Appendix A

Useful links

Scottish Government

[Advice on Covid-19](#)

[5 Level Protection System and what you can and cannot do](#)

[Guidance on general use and exemptions regarding face coverings](#)

[Stay at Home Guidance](#)

sportscotland

[Up to date guidance on sport advice](#)

Mountaineering Scotland

[Guidance for hill walkers & climbers in Scotland undertaking personal activity](#)

Scottish Disability Sport

[Guidance for those with a disability participating in activity](#)

Transport Scotland

[Travelling Safely](#)

SAGE

[Advice on mitigation of transmission of SARS-CoV2](#)

Cleaning and care of Equipment:

[Cleaning PPE](#)

Healthcare Scotland

[Cleaning in non healthcare settings outside the home](#)

[Hand hygiene](#)

Scottish Mountain Rescue

[Rescue and emergency procedures](#)

Resuscitation Council UK

[CPR Covid-19 statement](#)

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

Appendix B Level 4 Guidance for organised mountain-related activity

Introduction

97. The guidance within this appendix is applicable to all organised mountain-related activities where Scottish Government have identified the requirement for **Level 4** restrictions to be applied. For personal/informal mountain-related activity please refer to [Mountaineering Scotland guidance](#).
98. The information outlined below should be used in conjunction with, and where appropriate supersede, the guidance in this document relating to organised mountain-related activity within Level 4 areas.
99. It is the responsibility of the relevant activity provider / [COVID officer](#) to ensure that full risk assessments, processes and mitigating actions are in place before any organised mountain-related activity takes place and to check if the activity is in an area which is subject to additional Scottish Government localised measures and restrictions.
100. Where a local outbreak has been reported, mountain-related activity providers should review their facility/operational risk assessment and consider if additional mitigating actions should be put in place to reduce risk. This may, for example, include suspending activity, enhancing hygiene and physical distancing measures, or introducing additional activity restrictions.
101. Be aware that the Scottish Government may update or change Levels and restrictions at any time, including the local areas subject to them. Therefore providers/COVID officers should regularly check [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Local Protection Levels](#) .

Travel Restrictions Level 4 areas

102. Adults living in Level 4 local authority area should only travel locally within, but not outwith, that local authority area to take part in organised mountain-related activity as outlined in [Table A](#).
103. Children and young people may travel to and from a Level 4 area, but no further than necessary, for organised mountain-related activity as outlined in [Table A](#) if that is where their organised mountain-related activity usually takes place.
104. If children and young people from a Level 4 area travel to attend mountain-related activity in a Level 3 area or below, Level 4 guidance will apply to the whole activity e.g. 12 to 17-year-old outdoor activity should be restricted to non-contact and include a maximum of 15 participants.
105. When taking part in sport, exercise or recreation participants should at all times follow [Scottish Government guidance](#)

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

Organised Outdoor Mountain-Related Activity leader/Participant Ratios.

Restrictions on the number of people who can take part in organised outdoor mountain-related activity in Level 4 is as follows;

Children (aged up to 11 years)

106. Children can take part in outdoor contact and non-contact organised mountain-related activity including training, assessment and group exercise.
107. An outdoor sporting 'field of play bubble' can consist of up to 30 people including children, leaders, and staff at any one time.

Young People (aged 12 – 17 years)

108. Young People can take part in non-contact outdoor organised mountain-related activity including training, assessment, CPD and group exercise.
109. An outdoor sporting 'field of play bubble' can consist of up to 15 young people, including leaders, at any one time.
110. All other relevant and appropriate [COVID-19 mitigation measures](#); [travelling safely](#); [hygiene, medical and first aid](#); [equipment](#); [equality and inclusion](#) considerations should be adhered to.

Adults (aged 18 years or over)

92. Adults can take part in non-contact outdoor organised mountain-related activity including training, assessment, CPD and group exercise.
93. An outdoor sporting 'field of play bubble' for adults can consist of up to 15 people, including leaders at any one time. Physical distancing should always be maintained.
94. Where there are multiple bubbles operating at the same venue these must be risk assessed to ensure there can be no mixing of participants before, during or after the activity. Specific mitigations could include staggered start times, limiting car parking or controlling access / egress points.

Organised Indoor Mountain-Related Activity

111. Indoor sport and leisure facilities including climbing walls remain closed at Level 4.

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