**GLASGOW HF OUTDOOR CLUB**

**STANDARD SAFETY POLICY**

*This revised policy was approved at the committee meeting 12 November 2024*

A summary of this basic information is available in the “About Us” section on the club’s Meetup home : <https://www.meetup.com/glasgow-hf-outdoor-club/>

**Definitions**

*Walk organiser*

One of our leadership team of experienced walkers responsible for organising a club walk

*‘Late back’ Monitor*

Someone not attending the walk who the walk organiser has arranged to contact to confirm that everyone in the party is safely returned, or if there likely to be a late return, been any accident or illness on the hill requiring assistance. The monitor is empowered to use their judgement as to whether or when to call the emergency services.

**General**

1. Members must comply with all aspects of this safety policy as a condition of membership.
2. This policy covers not only walk safety per se but also respecting the physical, mental and emotional safety of other members on club events as described in our code of conduct “Respecting Others”.
3. Applicants for membership are required to confirm that they have read this safety policy and our code of conduct before membership is authorised. Applicants also have to give some indication of their prior walking experience. This is currently achieved by “pop-up” questions during the application process on the HF Meetup webpage.
4. Members must give us the their minimum contact details and those of emergency contacts needed in the event of an accident or medical emergency, and to keep them up-to-date.

We need both your first and second names to be available on our website – this is so that we can quickly find your personal or emergency contact details on the Mountaineering Scotland members’s database in the case of need.

Note: this information is held securely by Mountaineering Scotland and is not publicly accessible: according to our privacy policy it can only be accessed by an executive member of the HF committee (president/vice president/club secretary/treasurer/membership secretary/communications officer) as necessary in the performance of their duties.

We encourage members to do this themselves by logging in to their accounts on the Mountaineering Scotland members portal using their membership number on the email from Mountaineering Scotland confirming their club membership.

Note: all the fields for emergency contact details are mandatory and have to be filled in in order for the information to be registered and saved: the first and second name, email address, phone number and relationship of the emergency contact. <https://mountaineeringscotland.justgo.com/Account.mvc/Login?ReturnUrl=%2f>

Members should contact the HF membership secretary if they have any problems doing this.

1. The club, its committee, its walk organisers and individual members have the protection of Mountaineering Scotland’s combined civil and public liability insurance in the event of successful liability claim against any of them if proven negligent in some significant way. <https://www.mountaineering.scot/members/members-benefits/your-insurance>

**Note**: this is NOT personal accident insurance - if you wish such cover, you need to organise it yourself.

**Note**: Members are very unlikely to be able to make a successful liability claim against the club in the event of an accident if they neglect to comply with the club’s safety policy.

1. A central tenet of our walk safety policy is that it is the combined responsibility of everyone, not just the walk organiser.

We expect members never to act in such a way as to compromise the safety of others in the group; and experienced walkers on the walk to practically support the walk organiser, especially if conditions become difficult.

Walkers should respect the walk organiser’s advice but ultimately they are responsible for their own safety.

1. Our club espouses a spirit of openness about safety issues: any member should feel free to raise any matters of concern informally with any member of the committee. HF has an informal and formal complaints process to deal with any substantiated issues members raise.
2. All incidents, accidents or medical emergencies at club events (whether considered “serious” or not) should be reported to the club secretary and reviewed at the next committee meeting.

**Risk assessment of walks**

1. All our club walks are posted on the HF Meetup page with details of their grading (C through A+), ascent, distance and expected duration involved, typically together with some indication of the route, likely conditions, terrain and any particular difficulties involved, and (especially in winter) a statement of what extra equipment must be carried.
2. A description of what our walk grades C though A+ mean is available in the “About Us” section on the HF Meetup page (also copy below).

**Going on club walks**

1. Only members of the HF club can RSVP for club walks
2. Guests may be allowed on lower level walks at the discretion of the walk leader on certain designated weekends, such as the traditional primarily social St Andrew’s night weekend at the Crianlarich Hotel.
3. Potential members are offered the option of attending a couple of suitable walks before joining the club at the discretion of the walk organiser but this must be arranged on a case by case basis via the membership secretary or other club officer.
4. New members who want to go on a more strenuous walk (grades B+, A or A+) should contact Richard Botting (07884 198997) or Paul Harrison (07920 510734) prior to their first walk - this is especially important in winter.
5. The walk organiserwill ensure that there is an accurate list of those actually going on the walk when it starts and send it electronically to the walk monitor as soon as practicable.
6. There must be a minimum of three members on any club walk: if this criterion is not met a club walk must be cancelled.
7. This applies to regular club day walks and to any walks organised at a club weekend away.
8. This is so that in the event of an accident or injury, someone can stay with the injured party whilst the other seeks help if it cannot be summoned by telephone; or so that they can accompany someone who has become unwell or unfit during a walk back to safety.
9. Walkers who choose to ignore this minimum number requirement should note that the club takes no responsibility for them.
10. Walk organisers have the right to exclude anyone who they objectively do not consider fit or experienced enough for the walk or who do not have the essential kit or equipment.
11. In general we discourage splitting of the group except on safety grounds or in the event of an emergency.
12. We especially strongly discourage anyone leaving the group to walk alone since then there is no help immediately at hand in the event of an injury, serious accident or medical emergency.
13. No one who is is unable to keep pace with the group, becomes unfit, injured or unwell on a walk should be left to find their own way back to the walk start point.

**Kit**

1. Advice about appropriate personal kit for summer and winter conditions is given in the “About Us” section on the HF Meetup page (copy also below).
2. In addition, each high level (A or B) walk group should collectively carry the following minimal safety equipment: map, compass, GPS, a mountain first aid kit, and at least one 4-man group shelter (or two 2 man shelters).

**Walk organisers**

1. Club walks are always organised by one of our leadership team of experienced walkers.
2. As part of our effort to enhance the experience of members and particularly regular or potential walk organisers, we use funds from our membership fee to arrange subsidised local training courses on navigation skills, leadership skills, the silver NNAS award; winter skills; and first aid. Our members and walk organisers also have access to other courses by virtue of our club’s affiliation to Mountaineering Scotland.

***“Late back” policy***

1. Each organiser of a club walk should arrange a ‘late back’ monitor, a responsible person not on the walk, who the walk organiser can contact as soon as practicable to confirm that everyone in the party is safely returned, or if there likely to be a late return, been any accident or illness on the hill requiring assistance. The monitor is empowered to use their judgement as to whether or when to call the emergency services in the absence of any update from the walk organiser.

**Lifts to walks**

1. We encourage car sharing as far as possible. Naturally, we expect car drivers who offer lifts to be appropriately insured, drive safely, responsibly and legally and in a manner which their passengers feel comfortable with.

**Grading of walks**

1. *Grade A+*

Very strenuous: arduous traverses involving steep ascents/descents over rugged terrain – for experienced, energetic hillwalkers who enjoy a long day out of 8+ hours. Typically >1200 metres ascent + 20km.

*Grade A*

Strenuous: fitness, stamina & experience required for ascents of 900-1200m + 10-20 km walking at a brisk pace for 6/7 hours. Steep ascents/descents over rough ground.

*Grade B+*

Moderate to strenuous: for regular walkers or newcomers who are used to sustained aerobic exercise. A steady pace will be required for ascents between 600-900m (expect some steep gradients) + 10-15km usually covered over 6 hours.

*Grade B*

Moderate: usually on paths/tracks, 300-600m ascent (with possibly some steep sections) + 10-15km or up to 20km on flatter walks. Expect to be walking for 5/6 hours.

*Grade C+*

Easy to moderate: typically up to 300m ascent (gentle gradients) + 9-12km or up to 15km on flatter walks which should take 4/5 hours. Suitable for anyone with average fitness/limited walking experience.

*Grade C*

Easy: a maximum of 4 hours to cover 12km with minimal ascent on paths/tracks/roads always at a comfortable pace.

**Recommended kit for summer and winter walks**

**What Equipment Do I Need?**

1. For your own safety and enjoyment, when coming on one of our walks you should be properly equipped for the conditions. The walk organiser may exclude anyone they believe to be not properly equipped, or who they think may not be able to complete the walk in the required time.

*Basic kit list*:-

Rucksack, about 35 litres capacity

Walking boots with a treaded sole remain the recommended footwear

Comfortable outdoor clothing (avoid cotton under layers & denim trousers)

Waterproof jacket and overtrousers

Spare fleece or jumper, hat & gloves

Small First Aid kit (plasters, blister kit, bandage, disinfectant wipes)

Survival bag, whistle

Liquid (at least 1 litre, more in the summer if it’s hot) and/or flask if hot drink required

Enough food for a full day's walking + something extra, just in case

Map & compass Mobile phone and power bank backup

We recommend that you should also have in your rucksack emergency contact information: your name, address, telephone number and any relevant medical information, plus name and phone number of someone to be contacted in an emergency. If you carry an android mobile phone an emergency contact phone number can be inserted onto the lock screen. For iphones a free app to hold all the above emergency info can be downloaded.

*Summer extras*:-

Sun hat, sunscreen, midge repellent

*Winter extras*:-

Larger rucksack,

Ice axe, crampons,

Head torch (300-700 lumens power advised for hill walking)

Also advised are:- personal 1-2 person bothy shelter, gaiters, walking poles.