



Operating Procedures – COVID-19

Introduction

Covid-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It is caused by a virus called Coronavirus. Symptoms can be mild, moderate, severe or fatal.

These **Operating Procedures** should be read in conjunction with the **COVID-19 Risk Assessment**. Both documents provide details of the measures to mitigate the current Covid-19 situation in the context of the delivery of climbing and mountaineering activities. It is not likely to cover all scenarios and other employers and employees and sub-contractors should consider their own unique circumstances.

Government Advice for Employers regarding COVID-19 can be found here at:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Note: Guidance differs between devolved administrations, and the rest of the UK. Advice is also different in other countries of our operation such as France, Switzerland and Italy. All guides and instructors should be familiar with the **current** local guidance relating to the country of operation.

Transmission of Covid-19

These operating procedures have been produced following risk assessment and advice from [NHS Inform](#) on transmission.

Because Covid-19 is a new illness, we don't know exactly how the virus spreads from person to person (Source: NHS Inform). However, people can become infected when droplets land directly on them or they touch contaminated objects and surfaces. That is why good respiratory hygiene and hand washing are so important. The virus might also spread by people 2 days before developing symptoms or by those who don't develop significant symptoms at all.

How to avoid catching covid-19

You can reduce your risk of getting and spreading the infection by:

- avoiding direct hand contact with your eyes, nose and mouth
- maintaining good hand hygiene
- avoiding direct contact with people that have a respiratory illness and avoiding using their personal items such as their mobile phone.
- covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing with disposable tissues and disposing of them in the nearest waste bin after use
- following the [guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#) and [arranging to be tested](#) if someone in your household has symptoms
- making sure everyone in your household follows the [Scottish Government's coronavirus advice](#) as much as possible and to stay away from other people.



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- making sure everyone in your household follows the [physical distancing advice](#), especially anyone in a vulnerable group.
- helping those at extremely high risk of severe illness with coronavirus to follow the [shielding advice](#).

Transmission of Covid-19 in outdoor environments

There is a growing evidence base that transmission of covid-19 in outdoor environments is of much lower risk as aerosols and droplets are rapidly dispersed with air movement. Sunlight also damages covid-19 on surfaces due to the presence of UV, therefore potentially reducing the time it can survive outside. The assumption is that being outside is of much lower risk than being inside or in a confined place.

To avoid the spread of covid-19 all parties are requested to maintain:

- regular hand washing;
- appropriate cough and sneeze etiquette;
- acutely awareness of the symptoms of the virus;
- engage with the Test and Protect system; and
- isolate if there is the suspicion of having the virus (or someone in the same household suspects they have the same).

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Pre Course / Guiding Contract

Prior to a course or guiding contract Mountain Assurance Ltd will request clients or participants to:

- Immediately prior to any guided trip clients are free from the symptoms of covid-19, and not be in a position where you need to self isolate for any reason. [Coronavirus Advice – NHS Inform](#).
- Strongly recommend that clients bring their your own equipment wherever possible. Particularly, drinks, lunch and snacks, safety equipment and first aid kit etc.
- Ensure that Mountain Assurance Ltd have an updated Booking Form and Medical Information Form prior to their trip.
- Clients bring hand gel and a face covering should this be required.
- Clients are prepared to travel separately and meet outdoors in an attempt to reduce car sharing.
- Clients are prepared to maintain social distancing measures e.g. 2 metres spacing where possible.
- Clients are prepared adjust plans to avoid busy areas and maintain social distancing.

In addition guides and instructors are requested to:

- Speak to clients prior to any contact and discuss the above requests and make arrangements accordingly.
- Carry their own hand gel and face covering for use if required (e.g. on public transport, or during first aid etc).



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- Be flexible in making plans and be prepared to make changes in itinerary to maintain social distancing in addition to normal risk management of the activity.
- Be sympathetic to others may wish to exercise stricter controls than those outlined in these documents, and aid their facilitation wherever possible.
- Be sympathetic to those who choose to wear face protection more frequently than outlined in these documents.

Post Course / Guiding Contract

Clients and staff are requested to contact Mountain Assurance Ltd at the first available opportunity if they develop the symptoms of covid-19 following a trip with us. This will allow all parties to support Scotland's Test and Protect strategy.

During Course / Guiding Contract

All parties should endeavour to follow the points listed above under '**Transmission of Covid-19 in outdoor environments**'. i.e.

- regular hand washing;
- appropriate cough and sneeze etiquette;
- acute awareness of the symptoms of the virus;
- engage with the Test and Protect system; and
- isolate if there is the suspicion of having the virus (or someone in the same household suspects they have the same).

Activity Specific Guidance

Activity specific guidance is available from the Association of Mountaineering Instructors and British Mountain Guides joint statement: **Helping Keep Outdoor Activities Covid Secure.**

It should be noted that all climbing and mountaineering activities carry an element of risk, which Mountain Assurance Ltd staff are well placed to mitigate as part of their day to day professional practice. The requirements of these operating procedures and the risks posed by Covid-19 will need to be balanced with one or more risks of the activities themselves.

Critical safety situations or issues should take precedent over social distancing measures etc. e.g. breaking social distance to intervene with client belaying, or evacuating a hut due to fire are of immediate importance. Sanitary precautions e.g. hand hygiene can be undertaken when in a place of safety to mitigate the risk of covid-19 transmission.